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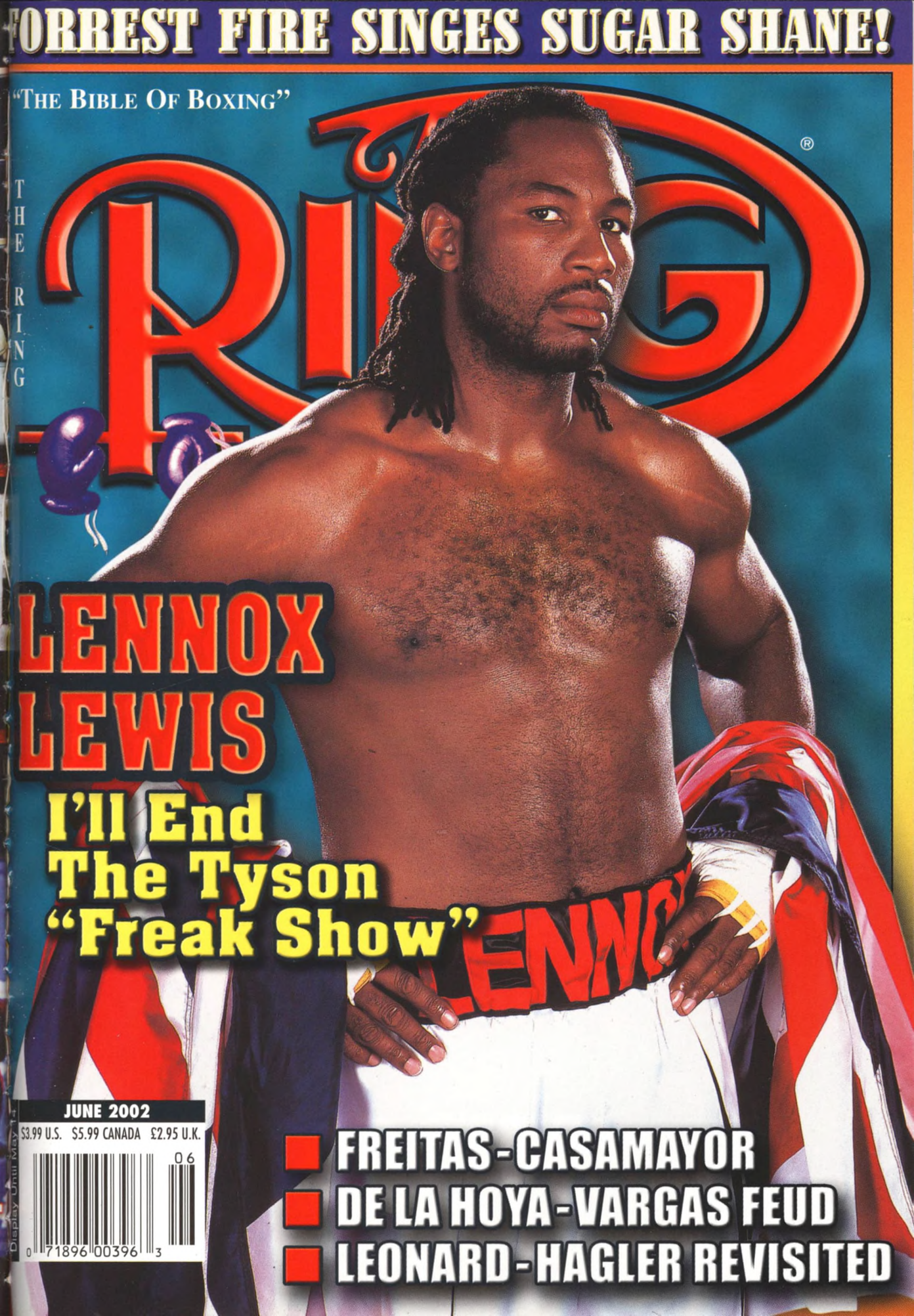

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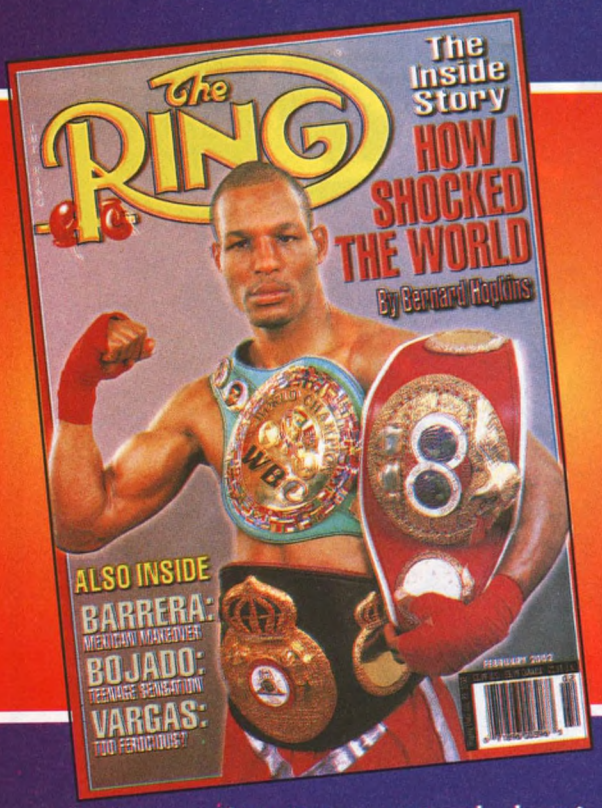

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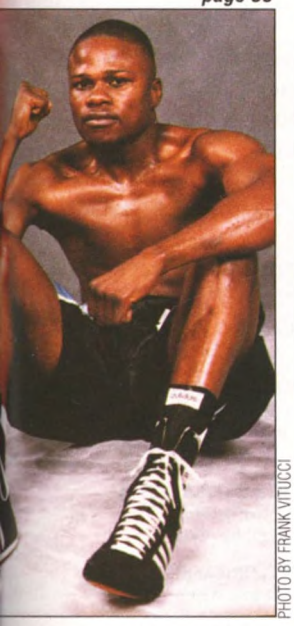

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Cover Design:
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RINGSIDE

I can't get inside the heads of the members of the Nevada State Athletic Commission who voted against granting Mike Tyson a boxing license. But prior to his press conference rumpus with Lennox Lewis, all indications were that the commission was ready to rubber stamp his application. And if that's true, turning Tyson down based on what happened in New York reeks of hypocrisy.

What was Mike's big sin, anyway? Missing the left hook he half-heartedly threw at one of Lewis' bodyguards? Marco Antonio Barrera *landed* the cheap shot he took at Erik Morales at their press conference, and the NSAC didn't yank his license. And what about Lewis and Hasim Rahman? They didn't have any trouble getting licensed in Nevada after breaking up a TV studio.

Was it the bite Tyson allegedly took out of Lewis' leg during the melee that changed everybody's mind? If so, why didn't the commission say so? I'll tell you why: They had no proof.

Yes, there are those troubling sexual assault allegations hanging over Tyson's head. But they were pending before things went haywire in New York, and that's not the commission's business, anyway. If the district attorney's office thinks it has a case, it should stop dicking around, bring charges, and give Tyson his day in court.

The way I look at it, if the commission really was prepared to give him a license before Mike waved his private parts at the media in New York (no law against that, right?), the decision to reject him afterward was a cosmetic con job.

Let's face it. Tyson wouldn't be capable of helping generate what could turn out to be the richest fight in boxing history if he was Mr. Politically Correct. If he wasn't a nut case, he'd just be another over-the-hill ex-champ looking for a payday. Don't kid yourself. Vegas knew all along what it was buying, but when the anti-Tyson factions turned up the heat, the powers-that-be got cold feet and folded. The commission was just the messenger boy.

***

Congratulations to 7-1 underdog Vernon Forrest on his eye-opening victory over Shane Mosley—and thanks for reminding most of us so-called experts that we're really nowhere near as smart as we think we are.

Forrest doesn't have the aesthetically pleasing style that made Mosley such a favorite, but he knows how to win, and is an engaging man who has worked hard and long to get where he is today. He's also pretty sharp when it comes to understanding what's important.

"Please don't call me a 'titlist' anymore," he told the media at the postfight press conference. "I've earned the right to be called a champion."

Yes, you have Vernon, and you are now the first world welterweight champion recognized under THE RING's new championship policy. Your RING championship belt is being manufactured as I write this, and will be ready in time for your first defense.

Unlike the IBF, which stripped Forrest because he fought Mosley instead of Michele Piccirillo, THE RING will continue to recognize Forrest as the true champion until he is either beaten in a title fight, moves to a different division, or retires. THE RING wants to encourage the top men to fight each other, not throw roadblocks in their path the way these asinine alphabet organizations do.

If you're keeping count, Forrest is the fifth world champion now recognized by THE RING. And with the Marco Antonio Barrera-Erik Morales and Oscar De La Hoya-Fernando Vargas fights scheduled to settle matters in the featherweight and junior middleweight divisions, vacancies are being filled at a brisk clip. But the most important thing about it is that they are real champions, not titlists.

If you don't know the difference, ask Vernon Forrest.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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The RING

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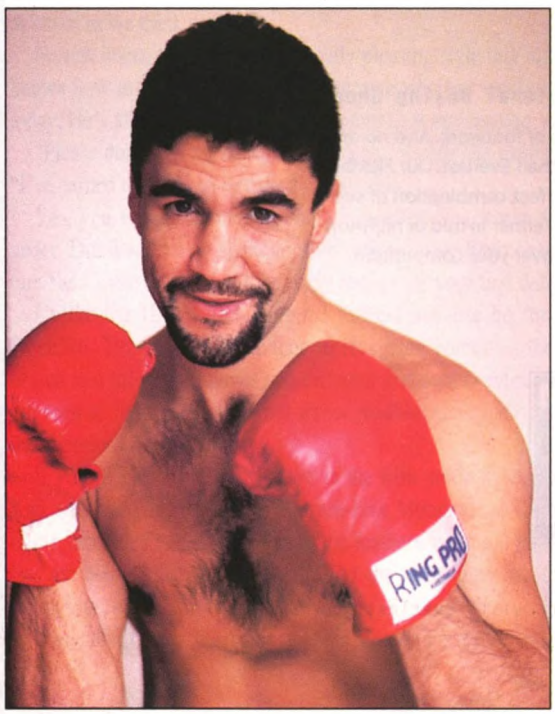
ROUND ONE

CANASTOTA'S CLASS OF 2002 ANNOUNCED

Ozzie Smith may be a wizard with the glove, but he's not the only one recently elected to a sports hall of fame. The International Boxing Hall of Fame announced their 2002 inductees in January, and this latest list of gloved (plus a few ungloved) wizards continues to play up the IBHOF's international scope, while also breaking down a gender wall that had stood since the opening of the Hall's Canastota, New York, doors in 1989.

Among the four inductees in the Modern category is one first-ballot selection (the first since Matthew Saad Muhammad in 1998), Australian three-division titlist **Jeff Fenech**. Fenech, 28-3-1 (21), held the IBF bantamweight title from 1985-'86, the WBC super bantamweight title from '87-'88, and the WBC featherweight title from '88-'90. Other Moderns: former heavyweight champion **Ingemar Johansson**, 26-2 (17), of Sweden, who defeated Floyd Patterson for the title in '59 and lost it back to him in '60; Argentina's **Victor Galindez**, 55-9-4 (34), who wore the WBA light heavyweight belt from '74-'78 and again in '79; and Mexican welterweight **Pipino Cuevas**, who held the WBA 147-pound title from '76-'80. All but Galindez are living and are expected to attend Hall of Fame Weekend, June 6-9.

Young Dutch Sam



Jeff Fenech

There are also six Old-Timers being inducted: junior lightweight champion **Benny Bass**, welterweight champ **The Dixie Kid**, bantamweight champ **Sixto Escobar**, bantam contender **Harry Harris**, heavyweight contender **Charley Mitchell**, and featherweight contender **Owen Moran**. **John C. Heenan** and **Young Dutch Sam** have both been named in the Pioneer category, journalists **Jimmy Cannon**, **Damon Runyan**, and **Reg Gutteridge** (who is still living and is expected to be on hand in June) join in the Observer category, and manager **Irving Cohen**, promoter **Sam Silverman**, and promoter **Aileen Eaton** are this year's Non-Participant honorees. Especially noteworthy is Eaton, who will become the first woman enshrined in Canastota.

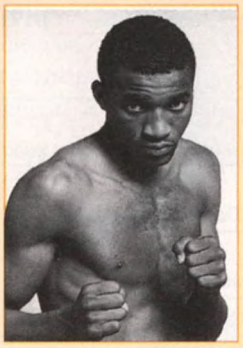
For more information regarding Hall of Fame Weekend, contact the IBHOF at (315) 697-7095.

—Eric Raskin

NEW HOPE FOR FLETCHER

Anthony Fletcher, the former lightweight contender from Philadelphia, has been sitting on death row in Pennsylvania since being convicted of murder in January of 1993. Last year, then-Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge signed Fletcher's death warrant, and the fighter was to be executed on May 3, 2001.

But an appeal bought Fletcher more time and thus gave his new attorneys the opportunity to gather evidence that could result in a new trial.



Fletcher: Looking for justice

Fletcher has long maintained his innocence. He says he engaged in a streetfight with Vaughn Christopher and that Christopher pulled out a gun. After the two struggled, the gun discharged twice. Christopher was shot in the leg and the side and died 12 hours later at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. The district attorney's office argued that the gun belonged to Fletcher and he murdered Christopher during a dispute over drugs.

Joseph Crawford, an attorney with Wolf, Block, Schorr, and Solis-Cohen, began working for Fletcher after the fighter wrote his firm about a year ago. He's optimistic about Fletcher's future.

"We're looking for a retrial," Crawford said. "That means his conviction would be overturned, he'd be given a new trial, and we would have the opportunity to prove he's not guilty."

Crawford's optimism is rooted in new information. At the original trial, Fletcher's court-appointed attorney never even argued that it could have been Christopher's gun. But in a petition for a new trial filed by Crawford, he lists several witnesses who state it was well-known that Christopher carried a gun.

But the most important new testimony may come from Dr. Hydow Park, the medical examiner who performed the autopsy on Christopher. Park was out of the country at the time of Fletcher's trial and has never testified. In an affidavit filed with Crawford's petition, Park says that the version of the shooting described by eyewitness Natalie Grant is "highly unlikely" and that Fletcher's account is "likely" and "consistent with the wounds." He also believes it was "highly unlikely" both wounds were inflicted by a shooter approaching from several feet away and shooting to kill.

Park also contradicts some of the trial testimony of Dr. Ian Hood, who testified on behalf of the medical examiner's office. In regard to a bruise on Christopher's chest, Hood testified that it was caused by a bullet traveling internally through Christopher's body. Park says that the bruise is "consistent with a struggle" and "could have been caused by either a fist or an elbow in the midst of such a struggle." When Crawford went back to interview Hood, he agreed with Park's assessment and recanted his trial testimony.

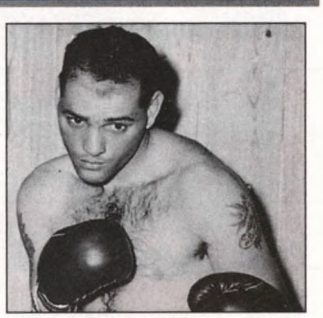
After Crawford filed his petition, a Pennsylvania state judge ordered the district attorney's office to file a response by April 10, 2002. After that, a hearing will be set during which Crawford can argue his case for Fletcher.

"We really believe we've identified serious injustices," said Crawford. "This was not justice. Anthony did not get close to the kind of justice you would hope to have found in a death penalty case."

—Robert Cassidy

BOBO OLSON, 1928-2002

Jimmy Cannon once wrote that Carl "Bobo" Olson had "the briskly harmless style of a gent's room attendant brushing off a customer." But the former streetfighter from Hawaii must have done something right during a pro career that began in 1944 and ended in '66, because not only did he become middleweight champion of the world, he also ended up in the International Boxing Hall of Fame (Class of 2000).



Olson: Hall of Fame middleweight champ dies

Sadly, Olson is best remembered today as the guy who lost to Ray Robinson (four times) and Archie Moore, but there were also some impressive names—Kid Gavilan, Randy Turpin, Joey Maxim, Lloyd Marshall, Paddy Young, Robert Villemain—on the winning side of his 99-16-2 (49) ledger.

After failing in two bids to unseat Robinson, Olson must have been overjoyed when Sugar Ray retired in '53, leaving Olson and Turpin to fight it out for his old title. Olson decisioned Turpin in October of that year and went on to make three successful defenses before Robinson came out of retirement to regain the belt via knockout in '55.

After he quit the ring, Olson worked for a school in Sacramento, California, where he headed up the security department by day and taught phys ed in the school gym at night.

A writer once asked Olson's manager, Sid Flaherty, if he regarded Olson as a great fighter. The manager hesitated for a moment and then replied, "I'm stupid enough to think so." Looking back, it's easy to see that Flaherty was far from stupid. True, Olson was no Robinson, but he was no men's room attendant either.

—Nigel Collins

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
1-4-02	Eliecer Castillo KO 5 Andre Purlett	ESPN2	h	C+	B	C+
Slow and steady wins the race, especially when the other guy has no chin						
1-4-02	Diobelys Hurtado W 12 Ricky Quiles	ESPN2	jw	C+	B-	B-
This was ugly early and took a while to get going, but once it did it turned into a good scrap						
1-5-02	**Leonard Dorin W 12 Raul Balbi**	**HBO**	**WBA l**	**B+**	**B**	**A**
Never before has the winner looked so much like a loser; Dorin's cuts had cuts						
1-5-02	James Leija Tech. Win 5 Micky Ward	HBO	jw	B+	A	B+
Think Leija starts bleeding over that right eye when the phone rings?						
1-11-02	Ivan Calderon W 8 Mike Thomas	ESPN2	jfl	C	C-	C+
Thomas as tough as they come, but Calderon a little too fast, too good						
1-11-02	Miguel Cotto KO 2 Joshua Smith	ESPN2	jw	C+	D	C+
Another reason to like Miguel Diaz, who surrendered for Smith commendably						
1-11-02	Eric Morel W 10 Alex Baba	ESPN2	jb	A-	C+	C+
Is there a more misleading nickname in all of sport than Morel's "Little Hands Of Steel"?						
1-12-02	Jeff Lacy KO 1 Fike Wilson	Show	sm	C+	D	D
Did Bobby Czyz really call Lacy potentially one of the best punchers ever at 175?						
1-12-02	Wayne McCullough KO 2 Alvin Brown	Show	f	C+	C-	B
Good to see McCullough back, but couldn't he have learned to slip a right hand during all that time away?						
1-12-02	**Acelino Freitas W 12 Joel Casamayor**	**Show**	**WBA jl**	**A**	**A**	**B-**
No way Freitas signs to fight Mayweather						
1-18-02	Debind Thapa Tech. Win 8 Omar Adorno	ESPN2	jf	C	C+	C-
Thapa makes Naseem Hamed look orthodox						
1-18-02	Mia St. John W 4 Gina Greenwald	ESPN2	jw	D+	D-	C
First fight back after kayo loss, St. John manages to, um, rack up another win						
1-18-02	David Telesco W 10 Julian Letterlough	ESPN2	lh	B	A	C+
May be time for "Mr. KO" to take a few easy ones; and who knew Telesco could box like that?						
1-19-02	DeMarcus Corley W 12 Ener Julio	Show	jw	B+	B+	C
Corley too sharp, too fast, too everything for sleep-walking Julio						
1-19-02	**Rosendo Alvarez KO 12 Pichit Siriwat**	**Show**	**WBA jfl**	**A**	**A**	**B**
So he can't beat Ricardo Lopez; Alvarez still one of the best little guys around						
1-19-02	Julio Pablo Chacon W 12 Victor Polo	Show	f	B+	A-	B
Hard-punching Chacon ekes out win over slippery Polo; how about Chacon-Hamed?						
1-19-02	Johnny Tapia KO 1 Eduardo Alvarez	Show	f	B+	F	C-
Anyone else think Mrs. Tapia gets better looking every time Johnny fights?						
1-25-02	Ben Tackie KO 5 Teddy Reid	ESPN	jw	A-	A-	A-
Perfect illustration of what happens when good fighters at two different levels get together						
1-25-02	Antonio Tarver W 12 Reggie Johnson	ESPN2	lh	A-	A	C+
Except for knockdown in ninth, Tarver in control throughout; is RJ down the road?						
1-26-02	Arturo Gatti KO 4 Terronn Millett	HBO	jw	B	A-	B+
Hey, Terronn, Arturo Gatti called; he wants his defense back						
1-26-02	**Vernon Forrest W 12 Shane Mosley**	**HBO**	**World w**	**A+**	**A**	**B-**
Shane: Is Forrest worth 1.5-mil?						

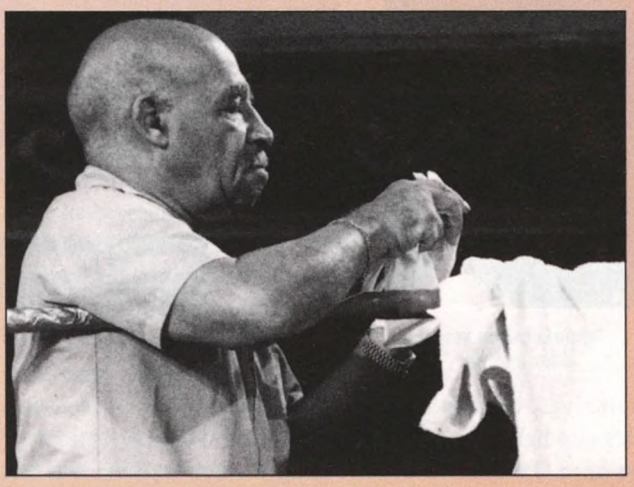
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Tel—Telemundo

MILT BAILEY, 1910-2002



Bailey: Great cutman dies at 91

Milt Bailey was a soft-spoken, unassuming man, not the kind to draw attention to himself by plastering photos of fighters on his head. But for more than 30 years, he was the cutman for some of boxing's biggest stars, including heavyweight champions Joe Frazier, Sonny Liston, and Leon Spinks.

Born in Norfolk, Virginia, Bailey moved to Philadelphia as a child and, after graduating from high school, attended Lincoln University on a football scholarship. When family problems forced him to drop out of school, Bailey played baseball for the old Negro League ($7 per game), had a brief amateur boxing career, and coached a football team for the Salvation Army. But it was as a cutman and assistant trainer that Bailey found his niche.

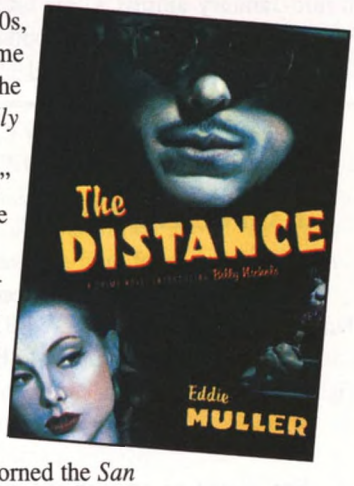
His list of clients was a virtual who's who of Philadelphia boxing. Bennie Briscoe, Gypsy Joe Harris, Kitten Hayward, Willie "The Worm" Monroe, Sugar Hart, Matthew Saad Muhammad, "Choo Choo" Charlie Brown, Robert Hines, and Rodney Moore all benefited from Bailey's cut-stopping expertise.

"Milt was a gentleman, one of the finest people I've ever met in or out of boxing," said promoter J Russell Peltz, who made many overseas trips with Bailey. "He was a friend, confidante, and traveling companion for more than 30 years. He was also as good a cutman as there ever was."

Maybe just as significant as his ability to work magic in the corner was Bailey's calm, reassuring presence. He was the sort of man who kept his head when everybody else was losing theirs, which can be a precious commodity in the untamed world of professional boxing.

—Nigel Collins

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



My father hated television with a passion and relentlessly lectured on its evils until the 1970s, when *Cannon*, *Barnaby Jones*, and *Kojak* turned fat, old, bald guys like him into prime-time heroes. Now I'm doing a similar about-face where the hackneyed, tired literary form known as the "Whodunit" is concerned. That's thanks to *The Distance: A Crime Novel Introducing Billy Nichols* (Scribner, 340 pages, $25), whose protagonist makes his living as a boxing writer.

Billy Nichols doesn't just write for the *San Francisco Inquirer*, but is known as "Mr. Boxing" in the City by the Bay in the palmy days of the late-1940s, when there was still a lively, active fight beat there to cover.

Nichols doesn't just know where the bodies are buried, but helps put one in the ground himself when heavyweight Hank Escalante takes out his manager for good with a rage-fueled wallop. That sets in motion a merry chase involving an Irish homicide dick who's smarter than he lets on, Escalante's eye-candy wife, and assorted other lively characters, including some real-life boxing figures from that era.

Author Eddie Muller does a fine job with them and the whole boxing milieu, which is what you'd expect from the son of the late, great boxing columnist of the same name whose work adorned the *San Francisco Examiner* for about a half-century,

Finicky ring historians might quibble on a few points by noting, for instance, that Manuel Ortiz didn't fight for the flyweight title, and that in real life Fred "Dummy" Mahan died in 1930, not '48. But this is a crime novel and not a textbook, and the appearances of real boxing folk only add to its appeal.

In the end, you have to love a book whose main character picks out an azalea as a gift for his paramour because its name reminded him of Tony Zale, and who hides evidence in his copy of *The Ring Record Book*.

Boxing and crime have too often been hand-in-glove, but the combination of the two has rarely resulted in anything as entertaining and satisfying as Muller's fun novel. May Billy Nichols return for many rounds to come.

—Pete Ehrmann

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Whitaker: One mess after another

Does a month ever go by without **Mike Tyson** getting in trouble? The latest incident occurred on New Year's Day in Cuba, where Tyson, on the island as a tourist, lost his cool when he found five journalists waiting for him at his hotel. According to witnesses, an irate Tyson began yelling insults and raising his fists in a threatening manner, then picked up three crystal balls from a decoration in the hotel's lobby and threw them at the journalists, causing them to smash on the floor. Tyson also allegedly lightly hit a Reuters cameraman twice on the back of the head. Perhaps most unsettling for boxing fans was not Tyson's behavior, but his appearance; in the brief video clips that made the American airwaves, Tyson, wearing jeans and no shirt, appeared significantly above his ideal fighting weight with his possible challenge of heavyweight champion **Lennox Lewis** looming three months later ... Future Hall of Famer **Pernell Whitaker** had an up-and-down start to his new year. In early-January, "Sweet Pea" pleaded guilty to a cocaine possession charge from five months earlier and was spared jail time because he was granted first-offender status. That's the good news. Just a few days later, Whitaker was charged with reckless driving and was sentenced to 30 days in jail. He appealed the sentence and was out on bail as of press time ... World-class referee **Steve Smoger** resigned from his job as a New Jersey municipal judge in mid-January amidst a fair bit of controversy. The State Advisory Panel on Judiciary Conduct filed a complaint against "Double S" last March, charging him with illegally setting bail in numerous instances. The panel also cited Smoger for continuing to referee boxing matches despite warning him to stop in '92. Smoger said his increased exposure in major fights contributed to his decision. "I know [refereeing] has been a problem with the ethics committee and I didn't want to exacerbate the situation," Smoger said ... Light heavyweight champ **Roy Jones'** debut rap single, "That Was Then," off his album, *Round One*, entered *Billboard's* Hot Rap radio-airplay chart at number two in mid-January. "I knew we cut some great songs and I'm really excited about my first album coming out," said Jones, "but I never dreamed we'd coming flying out of the chute and have the second most popular rap song in the entire country" ... Former Mexican lightweight champ **Julio Cesar Jimenez** died in late-December at the age of 79. Jimenez was perhaps best known for losing a pair of decisions to the great **Kid Gavilan** in 1945 ... 1950s and '60s Belgian bantamweight **Pierre Cossemyns** died in late-December at the age of 71. Cossemyns held the European bantam title from '61-'62 ... Correction: We reported in "Round One" in the March '02 issue that WBA minimumweight titlist **Yutaka Niida's** sudden retirement made him the first "world" titleholder to retire undefeated since **Rocky Marciano**. He's actually the second. South Korean **Ji Won Kim** held the IBF junior featherweight title from 1985-'86 and retired with a record of 16-0-2 (7).

Jones: Rappin' Roy debuts at number two

THE PUNCHLINES

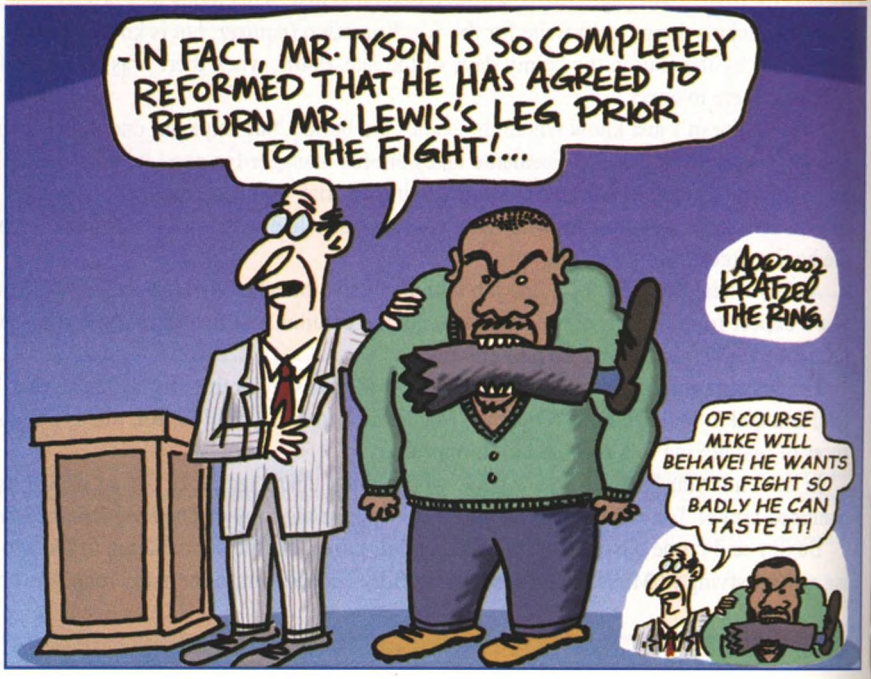
"Brazil might beat Cuba in soccer, but not in boxing."

—Joel Casamayor, prior to his fight with Acelino Freitas

"For Tyson to go into the ring with [Lennox Lewis] now would be a kamikaze move. Mike Tyson don't need to do no kamikaze."

—Don King, continuing to try to lure Tyson into a fight with John Ruiz instead of Lewis

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
2. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
4. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Junior Lightweight
5. **VERNON FORREST**
   Welterweight
6. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Middleweight
7. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Welterweight
8. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
9. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Junior Flyweight
10. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
    Junior Welterweight

(For period ended January 27, 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Virgil Hill, who has been inactive since winning the WBA belt in December '00, drops from third to fourth, trading places with the much busier Johnny Nelson.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: On the strength of his career-best win over Reggie Johnson, Antonio Tarver advances from fifth to third, pushing Johnson down from third to fourth and Montell Griffin down from fourth to fifth. David Telesco, who handily outpointed Julian Letterlough, returns at number six, bumping everyone below down a spot and bouncing Derrick Harmon (10th last issue) from the rankings.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: J.C. Candelo (eighth last issue) was upset by Angel Hernandez and, consequently, falls from the ratings. This pushes both Roman Karmazin (ninth last issue) and Steve Roberts (10th) up a spot and leaves room for Mamadou Thiam to enter at number 10.

WELTERWEIGHTS: The 147-pound class becomes the fifth to have a champ recognized under THE RING's new policy, following Vernon Forrest's upset win over Shane Mosley. Forrest, who was rated third last issue, is installed above the contenders, while Mosley, rated first last issue, remains the number-one contender. Everybody below Forrest climbs one notch, and the open space at number 10 is filled by Danny Perez.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Ener Julio was listless in his first fight in 18 months, losing a lopsided decision to third-rated DeMarcus Corley, so the Colombian, who was ranked fourth last issue, falls out of the top 10. Moving up to fill the fourth spot is Ben Tackie (seventh last issue), who looked in top form blasting out Teddy Reid. Jesse James Leija, who was previously ranked at lightweight, joins the 140-pound ratings at number six after scoring a technical-decision win over Micky Ward, who slides from sixth to seventh. And Terronn Millett (ninth last issue) tumbles from the ratings, replaced by the man who beat him, Arturo Gatti.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Leija's (ninth last issue) move up to junior welter makes room for Leonard Dorin, who debuts at number four after his thrilling win over Raul Balbi. Balbi, Angel Manfredy, Julio Diaz, and Artur Grigorian all descend one spot as a result of Dorin's arrival. And at the bottom, Colin Dunne (eighth last issue) goes down two spots, to 10th, after barely eking out a decision win over unknown Martin Jacobs. Climbing above Dunne, from 10th to ninth, is streaking Juan Lazcano.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Acelino Freitas' close win over Joel Casamayor boosts "Popo" from third to second, trading places with the Cuban. Alejandro Gonzalez, who was been competing exclusively as a lightweight lately, is removed from the 10th spot, making room for unbeaten Lamont Pearson.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Julio Pablo Chacon enters at ninth following his gritty win over Victor Polo, bumping Mbulelo Botile down from ninth to 10th, and squeezing William Abelyan (10th last issue) out of the ratings.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: WBA titlist Rosendo Alvarez' impressive 12th-round kayo of Pichit Siriwat allows "El Bufalo" to stampede up from fourth to second. Siriwat, meanwhile, slumps from third to fifth.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: The Forrest-Mosley result causes a major shakeup, as Sugar Shane is removed from the top spot, and Bernard Hopkins ascends from number two to number one. Forrest is inserted at number five, and Mosley tumbles to seventh, right above the man he once beat to claim pound-for-pound supremacy, Oscar De La Hoya. Roy Jones, Marco Antonio Barrera, and Floyd Mayweather all advance a spot due to Mosley's crash, and De La Hoya, Ricardo Lopez, and Kostya Tszyu all slip a notch due to Forrest's entrance. Erik Morales (10th last issue) is removed to make room. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended January 27, 2002

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

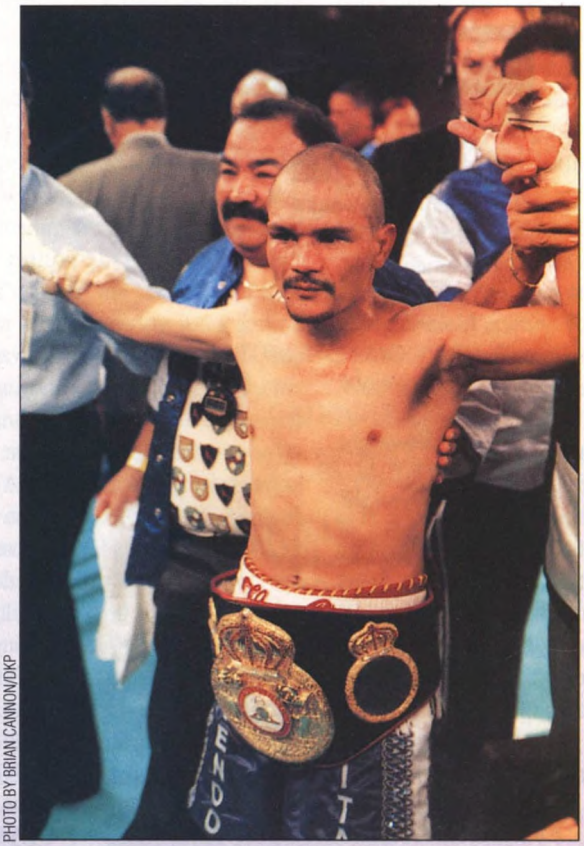


PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

Rosendo Alvarez climbed two spots at junior fly by defeating Pichit Siriwat

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 39-2-1

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 37-1
2. **MIKE TYSON**
Catskill, NY 49-3
3. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 34-2
4. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 35-3
5. **KIRK JOHNSON**
Canada 32-0-1
6. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
Fairburn, GA 37-5-2
7. **JOHN RUIZ**
Chelsea, MA 37-4-1
8. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 27-2-3
9. **FRES OQUENDO**
Puerto Rico 22-0
10. **DAVID TUA**
New Zealand 39-3

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Whittier, CA 34-2
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 22-1
3. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 42-3
4. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO**
Spain 52-5
5. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 45-3
6. **YORY BOY CAMPAS**
Mexico 79-4
7. **ALEX BUNEMA**
Dallas, TX 19-3-1
8. **ROMAN KARMAZIN**
Russia 28-0-1
9. **STEVE ROBERTS**
England 27-0
10. **MAMADOU THIAM**
France 38-2

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 54-3
2. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 41-0
3. **NASEEM HAMED**
England 35-1
4. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
Albuquerque, NM 51-2-2
5. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 38-5
6. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 60-11
7. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 37-2
8. **FRANKIE TOLEDO**
Paterson, NJ 40-6-1
9. **JULIO PABLO CHACON**
Argentina 43-2
10. **MBULELO BOTILE**
South Africa 27-2

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **BONES ADAMS**
Henderson, KY 41-4-3
2. **PAULIE AYALA**
Ft. Worth, TX 33-1
3. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 33-2-1
4. **WILLIE JORRIN**
Sacramento, CA 28-0
5. **LEHLO LEDWABA**
South Africa 33-2-1
6. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 42-3-1
7. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 32-1
8. **YOBER ORTEGA**
Venezuela 32-3-1
9. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
Mexico 29-2-2
10. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 31-2

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIM AUSTIN**
Cincinnati, OH 24-0-1
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 35-1-1
3. **EIDY MOYA**
Venezuela 15-1
4. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 26-3
5. **MARK JOHNSON**
Washington, D.C. 40-2
6. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 51-2
7. **MAURICIO MARTINEZ**
Panama 19-3-1
8. **ADAN VARGAS**
Mexico 36-3-1
9. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 23-1-1
10. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 24-3

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany 34-0
2. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 30-0
3. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 41-12-1
4. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 47-3
5. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 17-0
6. **EZRA SELLERS**
   Washington, D.C. 24-4
7. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 17-1
8. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina 32-4-1
8. **ALEXANDRE GUROV**
   Ukraine 29-3-1
10. **JORGE CASTRO**
    Argentina 120-7-3

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 45-1

1. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 45-0
2. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA 21-1-1
3. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 19-1
4. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX 42-7-1
5. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 41-3
6. **DAVID TELESCO**
   Port Chester, NY 26-3
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 27-1
8. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France 40-2-2
9. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY 31-2-1
10. **CLINTON WOODS**
    England 40-1

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 25-0
2. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 32-0
3. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 24-1-1
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 26-4-1
5. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 37-8
6. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX 41-6
7. **ERIC LUCAS**
   Canada 34-4-3
8. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 38-1
9. **MANUEL SIACA**
   Puerto Rico 15-4
10. **MARKUS BEYER**
    Germany 23-1

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 40-2-1

1. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico 40-1
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 33-2-1
3. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 32-1
4. **ARMAND KRAJNC**
   Sweden 26-0
5. **HARRY SIMON**
   Namibia 22-0
6. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. 35-3
7. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 32-5-1
8. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO 47-3-1
9. **ANTONIO PERUGINO**
   Italy 18-0
10. **TITO MENDOZA**
    Panama 26-3

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: VERNON FORREST
Atlanta, GA 34-0

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 38-1
2. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 21-0-1
3. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 26-0
4. **DANIEL SANTOS**
   Puerto Rico 24-2-1
5. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 37-3
6. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 25-3
7. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 22-10
8. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 36-1-1
9. **CORY SPINKS**
   St. Louis, MO 29-1
10. **DANNY PEREZ**
    El Cajon, CA 25-2

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 28-1-1

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 47-3
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 27-1
3. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 27-1-1
4. **BEN TACKIE**
   Ghana 24-2
5. **RANDALL BAILEY**
   Miami, FL 24-1
6. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX 43-5-2
7. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 37-11
8. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 28-1
9. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 34-5
10. **RICKY HATTON**
    England 27-0

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 45-4-1
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 33-2-1
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 34-0
4. **LEONARD DORIN**
   Canada 20-0
5. **RAUL BALBI**
   France 49-5-1
6. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 39-5-1
7. **JULIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 24-1
8. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 34-0
9. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 28-2-1
10. **COLIN DUNNE**
    England 36-1

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 27-0
2. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 31-0
3. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 26-1
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 35-2
5. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 20-1
6. **JONGKWON BAEK**
   South Korea 22-1-1
7. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 15-2-1
8. **PHILLIP NDOU**
   South Africa 25-1
9. **JOHN BROWN**
   Atlantic City, NJ 23-9
10. **LAMONT PEARSON**
    Capital Heights, MD 17-0-1

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 25-2-1
2. **CELES KOBAYASHI**
   Japan 24-4-3
3. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 21-3-1
4. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 43-4-2
5. **SAMSON TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 41-0
6. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela 34-9-3
7. **PEDRO ALCAZAR**
   Panama 22-1-1
8. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea 18-2
9. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 27-3
10. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
    Mexico 21-0

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 31-0
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 42-2
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 26-0
4. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 20-1
5. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 47-3
6. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 23-0-1
7. **MEDGOEN TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 24-1
8. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 39-1
9. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 11-1-2
10. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
    Venezuela 17-0

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico 50-0-1
2. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 31-2-1
3. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 23-1
4. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 26-1
5. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 24-2
6. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 21-2-1
7. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 27-3-1
8. **HIDENOBU HONDA**
   Japan 23-1
9. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa 17-3-2
10. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
    South Africa 51-12-2

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 26-1-1
2. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 19-0-1
3. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 45-2-2
4. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 21-7
5. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 31-6-1
6. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 14-2-1
7. **WANDEE SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand 28-4
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 33-2
9. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 25-1
10. **MIGUEL BARRERA**
    Colombia 20-0-2

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

RUNNING OUT OF TOMORROWS

My first inclination is to say that nothing in boxing lasts forever, but a Don King press conference, a phone conversation with Ferdie Pacheco, or the Holyfield-Ruiz rivalry definitely prove otherwise. So let me put it another way: There are a whole lot of people, places, and things in the fight game that have a limited shelf life. You think they'll be around until the end of time simply because they appear to have been around since the beginning of it. But, believe me, their days are numbered. And we're going to grieve over their exit, even if we don't realize it at the moment.

Almost four years ago, this column took a look at some of the Sweet Science's endangered species in an effort to appreciate them before they were gone. Today, some of them, like Pernell Whitaker's career and fight cards at the Great Western Forum, are history. Others, like Evander Holyfield and the dying art of defense, are still desperately hanging on. But despite boxing's never-ending attempt to turn back the clock, time marches forward. And one of these days, it's going to take the following with it:

Bernard Hopkins: He may have fought like a 22-year-old while dismantling Felix Trinidad, but "The Executioner" turned 37 in January. When a fighter reaches that age, he can instantly turn old any time the bell rings. It would be a real shame if that happened to Hopkins because, although the fight community has appreciated his skills for years, the mainstream sports fan has just gotten to know him and his shtick.

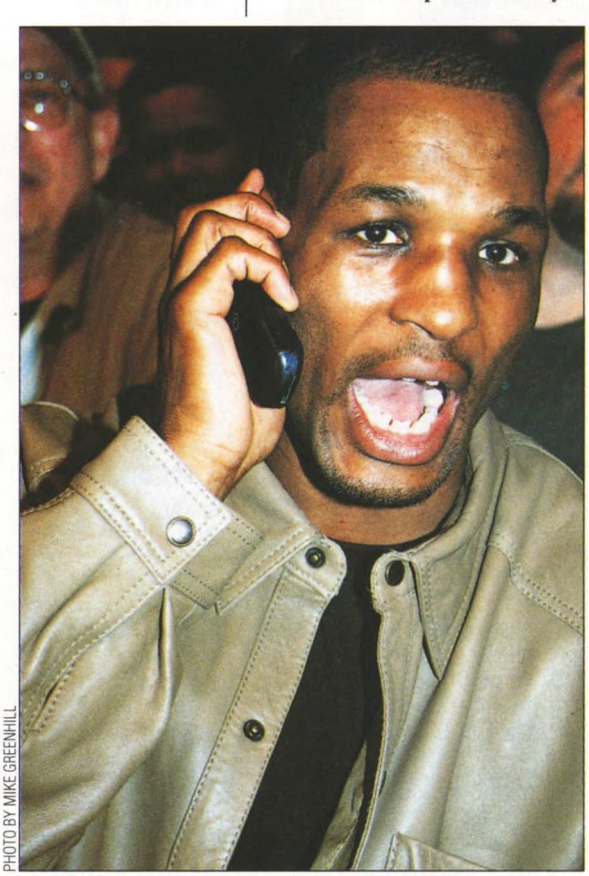


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

We'll miss Hopkins and his mouth when he's gone

The reason some fans loathe Hopkins is the same reason the game will suffer a void when he's no longer among its elite: He's so refreshingly politically incorrect. He trashes the Puerto Rican flag, boasts about how tough he was as a street thug, and talks down rivals and their fans. These days, when pro athletes are afraid to even criticize the opposing team's uniform colors, Hopkins' candor is a godsend, especially to writers.

Even in a sport in which the participants are especially media-friendly, Hopkins stands out as a journalist's best friend. No topic, from the reality of prison life to how much he paid for his house, is off-limits. While training in his West Philadelphia gym for the Keith Holmes bout last year, Hopkins actually stopped right in the middle of a drill in order to acknowledge my arrival. Try to imagine Andre Agassi putting down the racket or Brett Favre stopping scrimmage just to say hi to a writer.

Johnny Tapia: He's another guy whose troubled past, big mouth, and ring antics have made him plenty of enemies. But it's going to be hard saying goodbye to him one day because he epitomizes his sport's never-say-die spirit. Literally. Back in the days when he was overdosing on cocaine and heroin, Tapia was considered clinically dead on three occasions before being revived.

In his 35-year *vida loca*, Tapia has overcome addiction, prison, a near-drowning, his mother's vicious murder, depression, and a whole

lot of opponents who incorrectly saw his lanky body, lack of one-punch power, and scarred eyebrows as keys to their victory. Amazing what unwavering faith in God, not to mention one heck of a dependable left jab, can help a guy overcome.

Ricardo Lopez: The man has been so overlooked throughout his career that he makes Hopkins look like Muhammad Ali. And that's incredibly unfair, for there isn't a punch, feint, or step in existence that isn't in Lopez' repertoire. The Mexican reminds me of a great pitcher who, depending on his mood and the circumstances, can either blow the ball past the hitter or effectively nibble at the corners. Either way, he's striking you out.

Lopez, who will be 35 in July, kills a lot of myths about the little guys, particularly that they can't hit hard. Heck, if Lopez weighed 210 instead of 110, Lennox Lewis would be trying to duck him and HBO would be putting him on more than *The Sopranos*.

Madison Square Garden: The current version of the arena is actually the fourth to carry the famous name. And when this newest Garden opened, in 1968, it was thought that it couldn't possibly establish the boxing tradition of its immediate predecessor, a building whose marquee had advertised the likes of Sugar Ray Robinson, Henry Armstrong, Joe Louis, and Rocky Marciano.

Well, Garden IV has actually gone on to eclipse Garden III as a Mecca of maul, playing host to Hall of Famers Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Roberto Duran, Sugar Ray Leonard, Ken Norton, Emile Griffith, Floyd Patterson, Carlos Ortiz, Bob Foster, Wilfred Benitez, Alexis Arguello, Dick Tiger, Marvin Hagler, Salvador Sanchez, and Ken Buchanan, as well as future Canastota inductees Larry Holmes, George Foreman, Pernell Whitaker, Julio Cesar Chavez, Mike Tyson, Ricardo Lopez, Evander Holyfield, and Lennox Lewis.

Unfortunately, though, the MSG deathwatch is on. (You know the old story: Not enough luxury suites.) Though New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg has balked at spending tax money on new ballparks for the Yankees and Mets, constructing a new Garden seems a likely possibility because it would cost the city far less than the baseball venues would. And when the button is pushed and the implosion of Garden IV is complete, boxing will have lost its most famous and treasured venue.

Boxing won't be the same without Tyson

What drives me nuts is when broadcasters sit in the current MSG and say things like, "Robinson and Marciano fought here." No they didn't. They fought 16 blocks uptown. And Ali, Frazier, Duran, and Arguello won't have fought in the new skybox-laden monument to sterility that will open in a few years. *This* time, when we say that the new arena won't be able to live up to the fistic tradition of the old place, we'll be right.

Larry Merchant's commentary: My friends can't stand him, probably because they want their analysts to be John Madden, not John Updike. Merchant sounds like a writer because he is one, and his eloquent postbout summations are one of the best parts of HBO's fight coverage. Those sportscasters gifted at painting word pictures—Merchant, Bud Collins, Chick Hearn—are fading away, replaced by the ex-jocks and screamers who appeal to Generation X and display about as much grace and dignity as a fraternity tapping into its third keg.

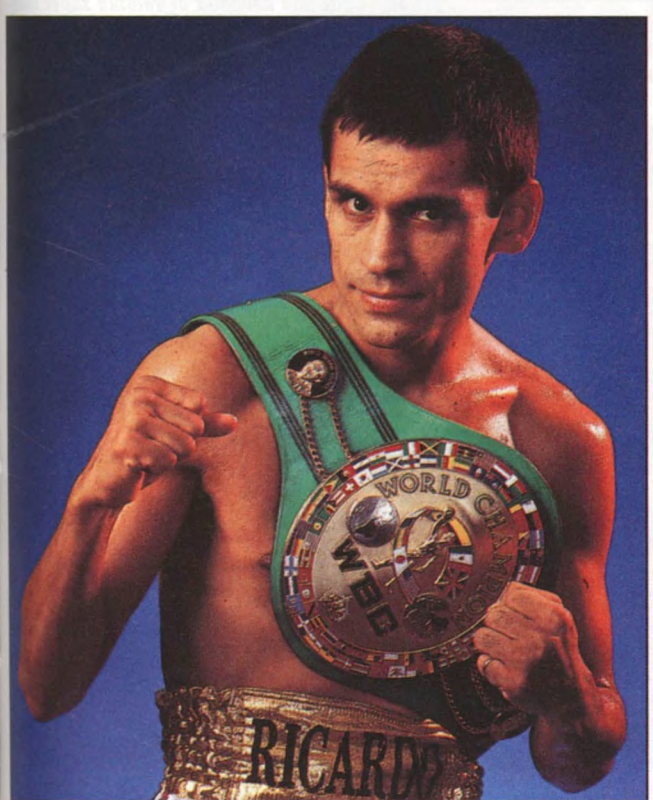
Now, if Merchant could just stop laughing at his own jokes ...

Mike Tyson: "Leg-Iron Mike," everyone's favorite ex-con ex-champ, made the list four years ago and belongs on it again. Even those of us who are completely fed up with his sideshow of a life have to admit that when he departs, he'll be taking the blueprints and mold with him.

If another fighter comes along who eschews a robe and socks, cuts his hair like Jack Dempsey, and recreates the legends' ring poses, it will be the result of some clever management team trying to concoct an image. Tyson, for all his flaws, is genuine. He's someone who colors not just outside the lines, but also outside the coloring book.

And he gets away with breaking the rules more than any world-class fighter in recent memory. I'm not talking about biting ears and wrenching arms. I'm talking about starting quickly without having worked up a sweat in the dressing room, swinging for a knockout on every punch, leading with uppercuts, etc. Tyson remains a fascinating character not because he's such a poor tortured soul, but because he can still torture poor souls. The punch is always the last thing to go, and as long as he has it, there will never be a combatant in the game whose fights are the "must-see" affairs that Tyson's still are.

Repulsive quotes. Dirty tactics. Inexcusable out-of-the-ring behavior. We won't miss that. But we're going to miss the hell out of him one day. Just watch. ■



Can you imagine a heavyweight with Lopez' artistry?

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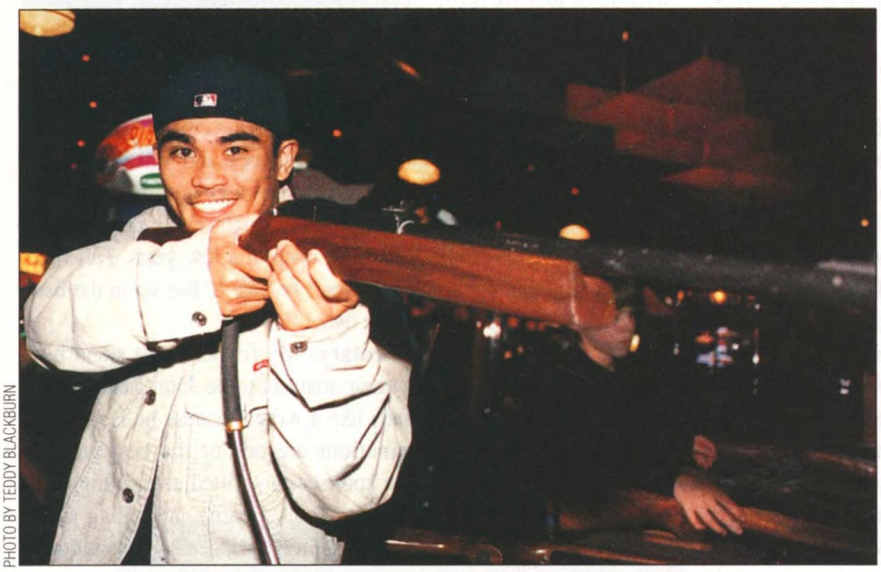

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

"Maybe if I'd had this with me at the Olympics, the U.S. wouldn't have come home without any gold medals." Flyweight prospect Brian "The Hawaiian Punch" Viloria is taking aim at greater success in the professional ranks, and if he keeps gunning for the knockout when he gets it in his sights, he has a heck of a shot at the big time.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

One look at those reddened, shut eyes and you know this kid's a Gatti. Specifically, it's Versace Victoria Gatti, the daughter of veteran super middleweight Joe Gatti and niece of former junior lightweight titlist Arturo Gatti, one day after she was born. If Laila Ali is still searching for name opponents 20 years from now ...

Sometimes if the fights on ESPN2's **Friday Night Fights** *aren't topnotch, the folks back in the studio try to make up for it. Here, we see the combatants posing for a supplementary card featuring producer Pat Knighton vs. Max Kellerman, Lou Duva vs. Charley Steiner, and producer Bill Graft vs. TBA.*

PHOTO BY TOM MCDONOUGH

Four of Philadelphia's all-time great boxing personalities, Tex Cobb, Harold Johnson, Bernard Hopkins, and Joe Frazier, gather at a December '01 card on which Frazier's daughter, Jacqui, fought. Seeing these four all lined up like this, it makes you wonder what might have happened if this had been the Philadelphia Eagles' defensive line when they played the St. Louis Rams in the playoffs.

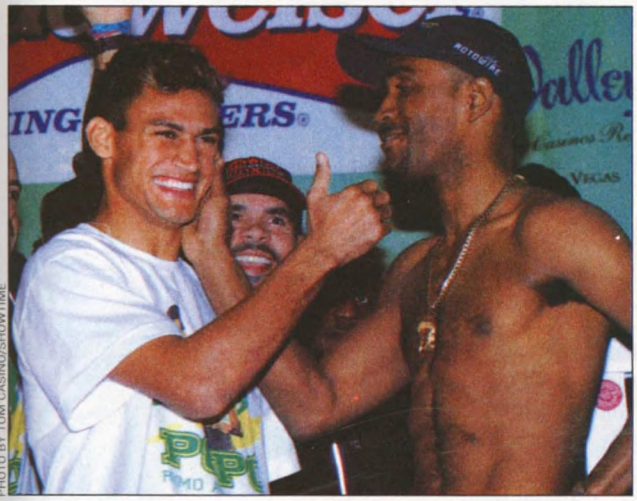

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

"Isn't he adorable?" Joel Casamayor gives Acelino Freitas a friendly pat on the cheek prior to their showdown. Little did Casamayor know what a cutie Freitas would turn out to be, as the Brazilian boxed, moved, and even ran a bit down the stretch to capture a decision victory.

PHOTO BY SCOTT ROMER

It's often been said that Christy Martin fights like a man, but now she has a man to do some fighting for her. Undefeated lightweight prospect Backlin Medrano is being managed by "The Coal Miner's Daughter," and if Martin does half as well with him as her management did with her, Medrano should have a bright future.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

One of Britain's greatest boxing heroes poses with one of their greatest current hopes, as former welterweight king Lloyd Honeyghan congratulates rising heavyweight prospect Danny Williams after a recent win. Perhaps Honeyghan is trying to rub onto Williams' glove a bit of the magic that went into his stunning upset of Donald Curry, as Williams is rumored to be in line for a possible shot at Lennox Lewis later this year.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Johnny Coulon won the world bantamweight title in 1910, and in 1962, he was still fighting—though not faring all that well. On his 73rd birthday, Coulon gave his wife, Marie, a free shot at him. And knowing how most marriages work, he probably had to be the one to apologize later.

NEW FACES

ANDRE TRUNOV

Welterweight

By Joe Santoliquito

PHOTO BY HAMON E. RIVERA

PRO RECORD

1993		
Oct. 25	Muslim Ahkmatov, Kiev, Ukraine	KO 3
1995		
Oct. 5	Viktor Fessetchko, Kiev	KO 3
1997		
March 1	Tom Cameron, Atlantic City	KO 2
July 10	Earl Brown, Syracuse, NY	W 8
2000		
Sept. 28	Frank Houghtaling, Rochester, NY	W 8
2001		
March 2	Donnel Ponton, Verona, NY	KO 3
June 6	Ed Dennis, Verona	KO 4
Nov. 30	Calvin Green, Philadelphia	KO 8

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
8	8	0	0	6

Lose and that's it. No more cars, multi-bedroom apartments, greasy American fast food, and opportunity. Andre Trunov keeps himself composed, despite that kind of pressure. Trunov fights in a crucible, with every slight move magnified. A momentary lapse in which he holds his left hand too low and risks getting knocked out could be a life-altering occurrence for Trunov. So the Ukrainian welterweight hides the urgency every time he steps into the ring, the anxiety curdling deep in the pit of his stomach.

Trunov fights for more than just putting food on the table and providing a roof over his family. Trunov fights for a way of life. The 29-year-old is on an extended stay in the United States, based on how successful he is in the ring. Trunov was allowed to leave the Ukraine and come to the U.S. under a specialized visa for professional athletes (P-1 Visa), issued by the United States Immigration Department.

If he fails, Trunov is in danger of being sent back home to the Ukraine, losing everything he's worked for since coming to the U.S. in October 1996.

"I have to fight to stay in the United States; I have to do everything according to my visa requirements, and that's to box and win to stay here," said Trunov, speaking English with a mild accent. "In order to renew my visa, I have to succeed. But I don't feel any extra pressure. I just have to be very careful in the ring. There are a lot of things that go through your mind when you're fighting, and you do naturally feel nervousness all of the time when you're about to get into the ring. But as soon as that bell rings, it's all over."

Though Trunov has succeeded in reaching a portion of his dream—living and fighting in the U.S.—much of his experience as a professional fighter in America has been a nightmare.

Trunov was an accomplished amateur in Russia. After graduating from high school, he moved to the Ukraine to pursue his education at the National Ukrainian University of Physical Culture and Sports, where Trunov would eventually receive a degree in physical education.

He became a junior champion in the Ukraine in '90 and won regional bronze medals there in '91 and '93. Soon after,

(Continued on page 61)

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Dec. 1991: Evander Holyfield vs. Mike Tyson: Who Will Win And Why. Plus: Eddie Aliano, Jack Britton, Muhammad Ali, Pernell Whitaker, rating the 44 world champions, Marcel Cerdan, Henry Cooper, Ezzard Charles-Jersey Joe Walcott (color).

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July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A Title Shot? Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patterson, Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camacho, Holmes-Ali (color).

Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Plus: Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

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Oct. 1992: The Supreme Dream: The Heavyweight Hopes Of The Heavyweight Hopefuls. Plus: Kevin Kelley, All-Time Top 10: South Africa, Meldrick Taylor-Sharmba Mitchell, Bob Foster, Eder Jofre, Max Baer (color).

Nov. 1992: Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion? Plus: Morrison-Hipp, Canizales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, Australia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from prison, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, Pat Barrett, Knockout Brown.

Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber: Joe Louis. Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roger Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jose Napoles (color).

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April 1993: Riddick Bowe: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: "Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, Morris East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time Top 10: Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough *Now?* Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Lennox Lewis, THE RING Poll, Freddie Pendleton.

Aug. 1993: A Ring Exclusive: Julio Cesar Chavez Speaks Out. Plus: Bobby Czyz, 10 hardest punchers, Rafael Ruelas, Carmen Basilio, closing of the Fifth Street Gym, Sugar Ray Leonard (color).

Nov. 1993: Julio Cesar Chavez: He Crushed Haugen ... He Annihilated Alli ... Is Pernell Whitaker Next! Plus: Marvin Hagler, Evander Holyfield, John-John Molina, Madison Square Garden, bizarre training methods.

April 1994: Michael Carbajal: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Brown-Norris, Kevin Kelley, Ceferino Garcia, Oscar De La Hoya, Tunney Hunsaker, Spinks-Foster.

May 1994: Division-By-Division: The Greatest Fighters Of All-Time. Plus: Virgil Hill & Orlando Canizales, Kostya Tszyu, James Toney, What If: Dempsey vs. Wills.

Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again. Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

Oct. 1994: Rating The Champs: Whitaker & Toney Lead The Field ... But Roy Jones Is Closing Fast. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Meldrick Taylor, Rafael Ruelas, Curtis Cokes.

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LENNOX LEWIS

I'll End The Tyson "Freak Show"

PHOTO BY CRAIG BLANKENHORN/HBO

By Brian Doogan

Whether partying in Miami, decorating the interior of his mother's new home, or just walking down the street alone or surrounded, Lennox Lewis now resonates almost Zen-like contentment. Self-assured, satisfied, he is the very antithesis of Mike Tyson, boxing's anarchic anti-hero. While Tyson was losing patience with reporters in Cuba in January, firing glass ornaments across a hotel lobby and allegedly striking photographer Felipe Borrego on the back of the head with his fist, Lewis was relaxing elsewhere in the Caribbean. One a free spirit, the other a troubled soul, Lewis and Tyson were meant to meet.

"Is it an opportunity for perfect closure on my career? You could say that," said Lewis, 39-2-1 (30), of a showdown with Tyson. "It's the fight the public wants to see and it's the fight I really want. Mike Tyson still stirs a reaction in people. He's nowhere near the fighter he was, but he has the name, the reputation, and he survives off that."

He has sullied that reputation to a degree unparalleled in contemporary sport. In and out of the ring, Tyson, 49-3 (43) with 2 no-contests, has succumbed to the dark forces of his volcanic nature and reduced his act to the level of a freak show. It was after one such descent toward

In Lewis' last fight (above), he looked simply devastating against Hasim Rahman, blasting out his previous conqueror in four rounds. Tyson also looked good in his last fight (right), but pudgy Dane Brian Nielsen was hardly suitable preparation for a title shot against a champion like Lewis.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

monstrosity—when he manhandled referee John Coyle in an attempt to completely dismantle Lou Savarese, a sacrificial opponent he had already beaten in just 38 seconds in Glasgow in June 2000—that Tyson issued his most notorious call for Lewis, a diatribe that sickened even fight men brought up to the tune of crude language.

"I'm the best ever, the most brutal, vicious champion there has ever been. No one can stop me," he roared from the ring that at that moment was transformed into his cage. "Lennox Lewis will be no match when I am right. I want to rip out his heart and feed it to him. I'm ferocious. I want his heart. I want to eat his children."

When Lewis reflects on that out-of-control rhetoric now, his reaction is one of amusement.

"I didn't have children then and I still don't now," he said. "I hope he's not going hungry."

There is certainly plenty at the champion's table. Feted almost universally for his annihilation of Hasim Rahman—who had the temerity to knock Lewis out in South Africa and then the audacity to brag about it, forcing Lewis to really make him pay—Lewis is now on top of his world. Regal deportment is his entitlement. Knighthood is merely a one-two away from the CBE (Commander of the British Empire) award Britain's world heavyweight champion received in Queen Elizabeth II's New Year's honors list. If the one-two is delivered square on Tyson's jaw, with the shocking, immobilizing effect Lewis has perfected, she might have to offer him part of her kingdom.

The fistic kingdom, however, is divided. Almost universal acclaim leaves room for dissenters, and Lewis has always had more than his fair share. The list of beaten foes he can lay at the foot of his critics—Mike Weaver, Tyrell Biggs, Razor Ruddock, Tony Tucker, Frank Bruno, Tommy Morrison, Ray Mercer, Oliver McCall, Andrew Golota, Shannon Briggs, Evander Holyfield, Michael Grant, David Tua—is often dismissed like suspect evidence might be in a court of law. Evidence of flaw feeds his objectors. Tyson's manager, Shelly Finkel, is in no way impartial, but he sums up precisely the prosecution's case.

"Flattening Hasim Rahman was no great achievement," Finkel declared. "Rahman looked like nothing in Las

NEVADA BITES BACK

We all know Mike Tyson is a whacko, but who would have thought he'd be crazy enough to sabotage a potential $20-million payday? But that's pretty much what happened when he instigated a wild melee at the New York City press conference to announce his proposed April 6 match with heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis in Las Vegas.

For readers who weren't anywhere near a television set the fourth week in January, here's what happened: Shortly after both fighters were introduced, Tyson bolted across the stage toward Lewis. When one of Lewis' bodyguards put his arm out to stop him, Tyson threw a left hook that missed. Lewis then hit Tyson with a right hand, at which point it turned into a free-for-all. Before it was over, Tyson had a cut on his scalp, WBC President Jose Sulaiman was momentarily knocked unconscious, and Lewis suffered a bite on his thigh, which he subsequently blamed on Tyson.

Even after security separated the combatants and restored a semblance of order, Tyson continued to behave in an outrageous manner, grabbing his crotch and unleashing a tirade of obscenities.

The highly publicized incident came back to haunt Tyson when the Nevada State Athletic Commission met on January 29 to consider his application for a boxing license. Prior to the ugly incident in New York, the licensing procedure was considered a formality. Las Vegas had been hurting for tourist dollars since September 11, and it had been estimated that a Lewis-Tyson fight would have a $400-million economic impact on the beleaguered resort town. But Tyson's latest freakout apparently changed a lot of minds, and the NSAC voted 4-1 against granting Tyson a license.

"We will not tolerate this kind of behavior from Mr. Tyson, not in boxing, and not in Nevada," said commissioner Amy Ayoub.

The unscheduled fracas in New York cost Tyson a Nevada boxing license

Tyson is free to apply for a license in another state, and although New York indicated it wasn't interested, Michigan, where Tyson fought Andrew Golota in October 2000, indicated he'd probably be welcome back. Texas and California have also put out the welcome mat.

Of course, without Lewis' cooperation there won't be a fight anywhere, but a couple of days after the NSAC handed down its decision, he made it clear that he still wanted Tyson.

"Tyson is the last notch on my belt, the icing on my cake," the champion said at London press conference. "I realize I'm not getting any younger. My main aim for staying around is Mike Tyson. It'd be disappointing if the fight doesn't go ahead. I would love it to happen before I retire."

Whether or not Lewis and Tyson will eventually meet in the ring was still strictly a matter of speculation when we went to press. But with so much money at stake and mainstream interest so high, it's still very much alive—just not in Nevada.

—Nigel Collins

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Nobody compares to Tyson for disturbing postfight rants, and the craziness he spouted at Jim Gray after fighting Lou Savarese in June '00, when he threatened to eat Lewis' children, was perhaps his most bizarre ever. "I didn't have children then and I still don't now," Lewis recently told THE RING.

known in his life. Tyson won't stay outside and let him take potshots. Can Lewis elude him enough to beat him? I don't think so. If Lewis is to win, he's going to have to do it by fighting Tyson. It won't be possible to run and avoid punishing exchanges for 12 rounds. Mike will be ready for this one. He will get to Lewis and, in my opinion, he will knock him out."

Vulnerable is the key word. For all the frightening demonstration of power almost god-like in its capacity for destruction, Lewis has never erased the sense of his vulnerability. His two stoppage defeats by McCall and Rahman, both avenged to leave him with the distinction of never having faced a man in 13 years of professional fist fighting he did not beat, are gaping holes in his otherwise formidable armory.

"I don't worry or even think about a guy like Lennox Lewis who gets knocked out," was Tyson's curt summation in Copenhagen, where he beat up Brian Nielsen last October.

Lewis believes Tyson could not have been thinking of him at all when he selected Nielsen, Golota, Savarese, and Julius

Vegas. He talked big, but never threatened to back up his boasts. There wasn't a trace of real aggression from him and he didn't know how to get away from a punch. He walked in there scared and was exposed for what he is, a very ordinary fighter who got lucky with one huge right hand in South Africa last April when Lewis paid for not training properly.

"Yet, faced with that feeble opposition, Lewis still showed how vulnerable he can be. After he was caught with a very minor left hook in the third round, his legs started doing a little unintentional dance. All through his career he has proved he does not take a punch well. He was knocked out by Rahman and before that by Oliver McCall, he was put in serious trouble by Shannon Briggs and Frank Bruno, and even Zeljko Mavrovic gave him uncomfortable moments.

"Men who are not punchers can cause him problems. He does his best work being a scared fighter. He never wants to stand there and mix it with anyone. But when he gets in with Mike Tyson, he'll have no other option. There is going to be more pressure put on him than he has ever

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Two-time former heavyweight champ George Foreman believes that Lewis, with all of his size, power, skill, and resilience, is better than Muhammad Ali, who knocked out Foreman in "The Rumble In The Jungle." "Big George" predicts that Lewis will knock Tyson out.

Francis as preparatory opponents. Stopping them in their tracks, Lewis reasons, is like a NASCAR driver preparing for Indianapolis by sitting by a computer screen and a joystick.

"I know this is the fight the public wants and I want it too and Tyson says he wants it. But, deep down, I don't think he does," Lewis insisted, several weeks before Tyson's press conference freakout scuttled their April 6 date in Las Vegas. "Whenever it was mentioned before, he talked about the need for two more fights, and just look at the people he's been fighting. In Copenhagen he fought a guy who could do nothing, a human heavybag. How will that help him when he's in against me? After he saw the job I did on Rahman, I'm sure he became even more reluctant.

"The door was open for Tyson to walk through it for a long time. What he chose to do was make noises from a safe distance outside. His bark is worse than his bite. He realizes that now there is no beating of Lennox Lewis and he definitely does not have the beating of me.

"Tyson will be easier than Rahman. I feel I learned my last lesson when I lost to Rahman in South Africa. People say I made the same mistake when I lost to Oliver McCall all those years ago, but they're wrong. Against McCall, I just wanted to go out and knock him out and that was my mistake. Against Rahman, it was just arrogance. I thought I could beat him so easily I didn't prepare properly. The fact that he showed me such little respect for so long helped my motivation for the second fight. I said to myself, 'This guy needs to be taken out,' and I worked very hard to make it happen.

"Now all I really want is Tyson. He may lose his head and do something abnormal, something outrageous, like he did in his second fight with Evander Holyfield in 1997 when he could not handle his frustrations and bit off pieces of Holyfield's ears. Tyson couldn't take him on in the pugilistic sense, and that is where he fails. He really should be in WWF wrestling. The real attraction now is not what he can offer through his boxing, it is the freak show that constantly surrounds him."

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Lewis has shown tremendous contentment and self-assuredness since regaining the heavyweight title last November, and he looks forward to his bout with Tyson as the "perfect closure" for his career. He just has to be careful not to reach the point of overconfidence, because even this faded version of Tyson certainly has the punch to capitalize on Lewis' vulnerable chin.

Lewis, on the other hand, is surrounded by an aura of tranquility that only yields to the violent imperatives of his profession when the bell rings, and when it does there are those who say he is now invincible.

"Lennox Lewis, I believe at this point, is better than Muhammad Ali," said George Foreman recently, over 27 years after Ali knocked him out in Zaire, so concussion was no excuse for his assertion—though perhaps his presence in London was. "Ali had to take a beating before he got you, like in Zaire when he did his rope-a-dope and I, the dope, kept hitting his arms and body until I had nothing left and was tired of hitting him. Lennox doesn't take punishment. He's been knocked down, knocked out, and he's come back. But when he's on top of his game, he's unbeatable.

"From John L. Sullivan through Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, and all the way up to Muhammad Ali, Lennox Lewis belongs in there with the all-time heavyweight greats. Tyson's not all that good anymore. He'll bite you. He's good at that. But to have come back so spectacularly from being knocked out by Rahman—and I thought the Yank might do it again—demonstrated all we need to know about Lewis. There is no one who comes close to the skill and resilience he has. To be defeated and come back better is the hallmark of a true champion.

"Lennox has that George Foreman jab, and when he comes out and throws it with conviction, there is not a heavyweight out there who could take it. I see the similarity between this fight and my fight against Joe Frazier when I first won the title. Tyson and Frazier are smaller men than Lennox and myself. Joe was a dangerous puncher, and I just knew I had to get my punches in first or he could take my head off. Tyson has that power, too, but he weighed about 240 pounds for his last fight and will have to get down to his best fighting weight to recapture the rhythm and intensity that made him such a phenomenon. Lennox, however, has far too much for him. He'll knock Tyson out."

Emanuel Steward, Lewis' trainer for the past seven years, discounts the threat of the 36-year-old's susceptibilities offering Tyson the opportunity of a knockout the other way.

"When Lennox perceives the guy he is in the ring with to be dangerous, he goes to another level," said the patriarch of the Kronk Gym in Detroit. "There are people saying that Mike Tyson will be too tough, that he's an animal, that Lennox lacks the balls. That's complete garbage. With the strength, size, and talent he has, combined with the agility and coordination he's acquired, this is a fight he can't lose."

If he does, he will have lost everything. Legacies are never built on ground prone to erosion, the kind of sod Tyson has been occupying for some time. A burial fit for a king is in order by heavyweight boxing's righteous ruler, and Lewis should need no army to put Tyson away. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING'S European correspondent.

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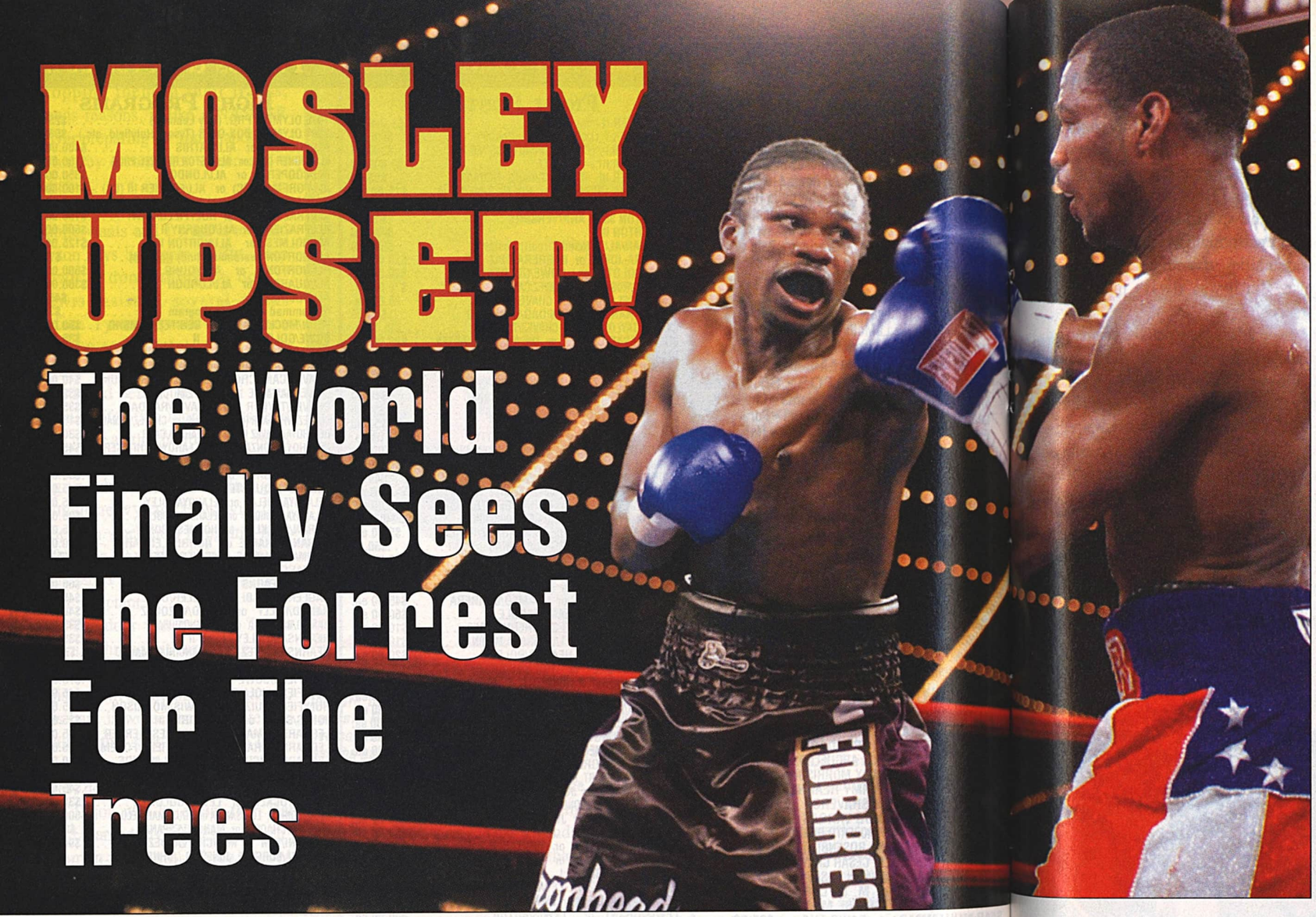


By Nigel Collins

PHOTOS BY JESSE D. GARRABRANT/GETTY IMAGES

When Vernon Forrest's right hand sent Shane Mosley crumpling to the canvas in the second round, it was hard to know who suffered the biggest shock—Sugar Shane or the vast majority of those watching.

It was wild enough when Forrest creamed Mosley in the second and came within a couple of heartbeats of stopping him. But when he went on to take a wide decision, Forrest not only won outright ownership of the world welterweight title, he created a Seismic shift in the pound-for-pound hierarchy that continues to reverberate throughout the sport.

We should be used to it by now, of course, especially after all the upsets that rocked the boxing world in 2001. But this wasn't supposed to happen, not to Mosley, anyway. He was supposed to be special, and maybe he still is. But for the time being, most people's preconceived notions took an even worse beating than Mosley.

Obviously, almost everybody underestimated Forrest and overestimated Mosley. In retrospect, this was an easy trap to fall into. True, both fighters entered the ring with undefeated professional records, but Mosley had compiled his resume on a more prominent stage, having been an HBO house fighter for a number of years, while Forrest had toiled mainly on low-budget cable shows or played second fiddle on the undercards of more prominent fighters.

When Forrest won the vacant IBF welterweight title the same night Felix Trinidad dismantled William Joppy to take the WBA middleweight crown, it came as no big surprise when hardly anybody noticed.

Mosley had also fought a higher level of competition, and looked better doing it than Forrest had beating the also-rans of the 147-pound division.

Sugar Shane was the fighter that fans pointed to as an example of everything that's right about the sport, a clean-cut, super-talented guy who could dazzle just as brilliantly with his smile as he could with his laser-quick combinations. Heck, a lot of folks thought he could lead the Sweet Science into a new era of prosperity if only the media would stop obsessing over Mike Tyson.

Forrest, on the other hand, had failed to stir up much excitement since turning pro in 1992, following a disappointing showing in the Olympics. Even his title-winning effort against the undistinguished Raul Frank was an uninspiring affair.

Forrest willingly admits he tends to fight up or down to the level of his competition, but against Mosley, he took his game to new heights, and beat Mosley so thoroughly, that even the loser couldn't help showing his admiration.

"Vernon did a number on me, didn't he?" said a chagrinned Mosley, moments after losing his undefeated record.

So how did it happen? How did a fighter widely considered the best in the world get upset by a guy a lot of people had never heard of?

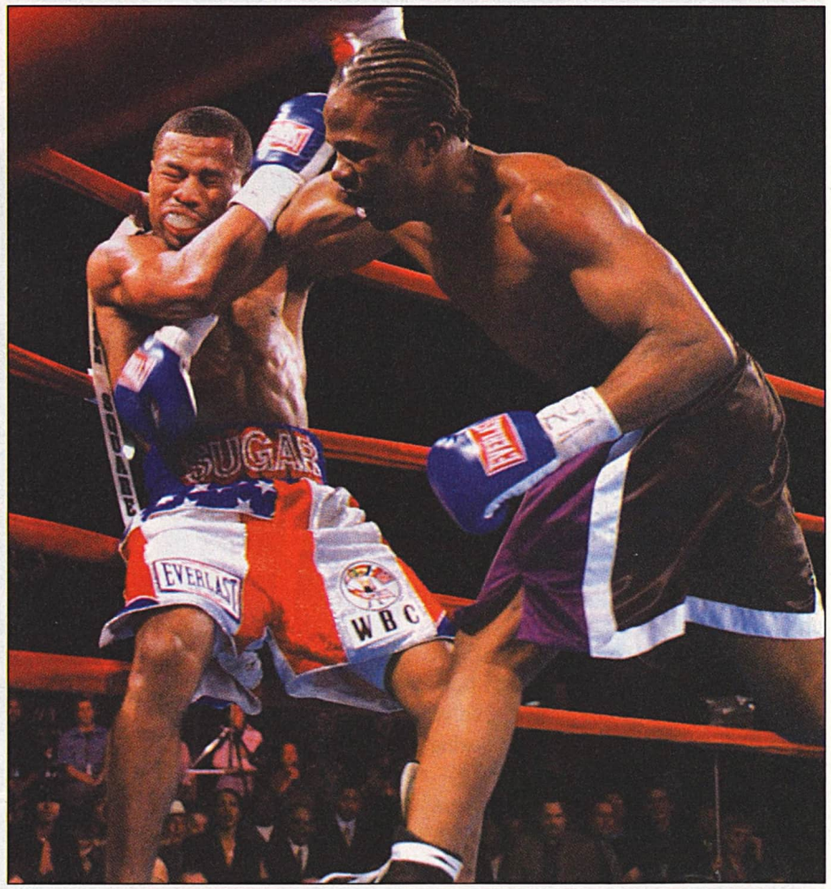
To start with, Forrest is a damned good fighter. He also had a pretty good idea of how to beat Mosley, because he'd already done it once before. But that was 10 years ago, when they were amateurs. How pertinent that three-round victory would be in a 12-round professional fight was uncertain. At the very least, however, it provided a promotional hook and also gave Forrest and his trainers, Ronnie Shields and Al Mitchell, an excellent foundation on which to map their strategy.

Okay, so Forrest and his team had a well-considered plan and executed it well, but there had to be more to it than that. Didn't there? There generally is.

"I believe Forrest was the hungrier fighter," said Larry Merchant, who was ringside as part of HBO's broadcast team. "Mosley may also have been too concerned about his recognition beyond the boxing world. That sort of thing might not be a distraction until you meet a good fighter. It doesn't matter against Adrian Stone, but it does against Vernon Forrest."

Besides worrying about his lack of crossover appeal, Mosley was reportedly preoccupied with hammering out a prenuptial agreement with his wife-to-be (who was pregnant with their second child at the time) during the final two weeks immediately leading up to the fight. He also had the additional worry of Jose Antonio Celaya, an up-and-coming welterweight with whom Mosley has a business relationship, and who just happened to be fighting on the undercard. Believe it or not, Sugar Shane even had final say-so on who sang "God Bless America" before the main event.

"That's the stuff that comes with fame and fortune," said Merchant. "Certainly,



Forrest drills Mosley with a crushing right in the second round that sent Sugar Shane to the canvas for the first of two trips. Each time, Mosley, who had never been down before in his pro career, picked himself up and soldiered on, but he never really got back into the fight.

After absorbing numerous powerful follow-up shots from Forrest in second round, Mosley sank to the floor again, desperately grabbing at Forrest's legs for support.

But even Forrest admits that he hasn't always performed as well as he would have liked, which could have misled us into thinking that he wasn't as good as he turned out to be against Mosley.

"I've had some great performances off TV," he said. "For some reason, until now, when the spotlight was the brightest, I didn't perform up to my best. Sometimes it was injuries, sometimes it was something else. But it was always just the circumstances."

Even though he should have known better, maybe even Mosley got a false impression.

"I don't think Shane thought Vernon would fight such a disciplined fight," said Mitchell, who had coached Forrest in the amateurs and rejoined his corner in August 2000. "He was more controlled, more balanced. He didn't force anything. He just stayed behind the jab. In fact, Vernon almost fought a perfect fight."

The same could not be said for Mosley. Even in the first round, a round he won on virtually everybody's card, he didn't look like the same Shane Mosley who beat Oscar De La Hoya. He was flat-footed, instead of moving on the balls of his feet,

Roy Jones has gotten away with a lot of this stuff. Roy Jones is the king of distractions. But all of the side issues are part of the picture."

But that wasn't all. Even during the early stages of training there were reports that Sugar Shane wasn't looking as sweet as he usually does in the gym. Forrest, meanwhile, was in the best condition of his career, having trained close to five months for his moment of truth. He also took encouragement from the accomplishments of another notable underdog.

"When I saw Bernard Hopkins beat Trinidad, it was my greatest inspiration," Forrest told THE RING a few days after upsetting Mosley. "Bernard and me are much alike, we're both old-school, cut from the same cloth. We've both been through a lot of ups and downs. We've both had to deal with setbacks and boxing politics."

Forrest also feels that he, like Hopkins, has been overlooked, while less-deserving fighters basked in the spotlight.

"Nowadays, it's more about image, glitz, and glitter, and less about professionalism," said Forrest.

Mosley never quit trying for the come-from-behind win, but he had trouble throughout the fight getting in range to catch the taller Forrest with long right hands like this.

and seemed to be loading up, looking for a quick knockout, rather than going about the task of gradually breaking down his man.

It's impossible to know how Mosley would have fought had he not been so badly hurt in the second round, but even after he cleared the cobwebs out of his head—which took three or four rounds—he seldom unleashed the bodyshots that have crippled so many of his past opponents. Just as telling, according to CompuBox, Mosley landed only 45 of the 204 jabs he threw, and landed in *single* digits in nine of 12 rounds.

Right after the fight, everybody was asking, "What happened to Mosley?" Well, the answer is deceptively simple: Forrest happened to Mosley.

It can't be emphasized enough that Mosley's biggest problem was Vernon Forrest. Okay, so maybe Sugar Shane was distracted. Maybe he didn't train quite as hard as he did for De La Hoya. Maybe he got a bit soft belting out no-hopers Shannan Taylor and Stone. But if any of that played a significant role in his defeat, Mosley has nobody to blame but himself. Being able to control distractions is all part of being a championship-caliber fighter. If you can't handle it, tough.

SUGAR SHOCK!

You sensed it almost right away, even before the second-round fireworks. The brilliant smile was there as he danced into the ring, his abs rippled the way they usually do, but you got the idea that it wasn't going to be an easy night for Sugar Shane Mosley. It was hard to pin down, but something was missing.

Conversely, Forrest, 147, Atlanta, Georgia, exuded an aura of quiet confidence. Trainers Ronnie Shields and Al Mitchell knew that Mosley's speed was his greatest weapon, and they'd focused their fight plan on negating it.

"Shane is fast, but only if you stand right in front of him," explained Shields. "That's why I told Vernon to keep turning him, because Shane can't punch on angles. We worked on defense every day. From the first bell, it was our plan to hit and hold. We also planned to use the jab overtime."

Forrest pins Sugar Shane in a corner and pounds away

Forrest made his mission much easier than anyone could have imagined with a spectacular sequence of punches in the second round. But before that electrifying moment, there was a precursor of sorts, when the fighters' heads smacked together earlier in the round. Both reeled backward, momentarily dazed by the collision, but Mosley also emerged with blood trickling from a scalp cut, a bemused look on his face.

They tapped gloves after a brief timeout, and went back to trying to do damage to one another with their fists. Who knows how buzzed Mosley still was when a murderous right uppercut scrambled his circuits later the same round? But he didn't offer it as an excuse, so we won't either. A split second after the uppercut connected, a grazing left hook followed, and then a whistling right landed flush, toppling Mosley to his side.

"I thought, *Wow! I'm actually going down,*" recalled Mosley, with an embarrassed laugh. "So I got back up. My legs were a little rubbery, but I wasn't afraid I was going to get knocked out or anything."

Forrest almost finished him anyway, bowling Mosley over a second time with a barrage of rights. But luck was with Mosley, and the bell rang during the count.

Although the capacity crowd of 5,323 in attendance at The Theater at Madison Square Garden tried to rally Mosley by chanting his name, Forrest never let him back into the fight. He moved, jabbed, and clinched repeatedly, whatever was necessary to keep Mosley on the outside. Of course, when you've been hit as hard as Mosley was in the second, it can change your perspective in more ways than one.

"We figured that after Vernon hit him, Shane wouldn't want to come inside," said Shields.

To his credit, Mosley, 146, Pomona, California, kept plugging away as best he could, and seemed to be wearing Forrest down a bit in the eighth and ninth rounds. This impression was aided to a large degree by all the holding Forrest was doing, but in the 10th round, Forrest put a punctuation mark on his victory that almost sent Sugar Shane home early.

A wicked left hook to the side nearly folded Mosley to the floor and put an end to any hope of a comeback. But Mosley, 38-1 (35), continued to show resilience, and aided by a timeout to replace his mouthpiece, he made it through the round.

"Nobody ever went to Shane's body before because they were intimidated by his hand speed," said Shields.

Both fighters were pretty spent after the 10th round, and Forrest, 34-0 (26) with 1 no-contest, coasted home to victory by appropriately wide scores of 115-110 (Tom Kaczmarek), 117-108 (Melvina Lathan), and 118-108 (Julie Lederman).

"I beat him before because I was a better fighter," said Forrest, in reference to their amateur bout. "I beat him tonight because I was the better fighter. It was nothing more, nothing less. There was no top-secret stuff, just basic boxing."

Sometimes, when you're as good a boxer as Forrest, that's more than enough.

—NC

As with all major upsets, a lingering incredulity accompanies the Forrest-Mosley result. People aren't completely sure about Forrest yet. They want to see him do it again, and for a change, all parties seemed willing to do it again. At least they were in the immediate aftermath of the fight.

You don't see immediate rematches that much anymore, but this might be the exception, especially as it's probably the only big-money fight available to either right now. But even if a rematch doesn't materialize right away, we've still learned something about both fighters that will surely figure significantly in a return engagement, regardless of when it happens.

Now we know that Forrest, never considered a devastating puncher, can whack hard enough to hurt Mosley. He did it twice, once in the second, and again in the 10th. But those moments also told us something about Mosley that we didn't know before. Now we know that he's got what it takes to get up off the floor and keep going when it's the other guy who is having all the fun. In defeat, Mosley proved he's more than just a talented frontrunner.

"Mosley showed heart, courage, and spirit," noted Merchant. "We found out that he's not just quick and flashy; he has inner toughness."

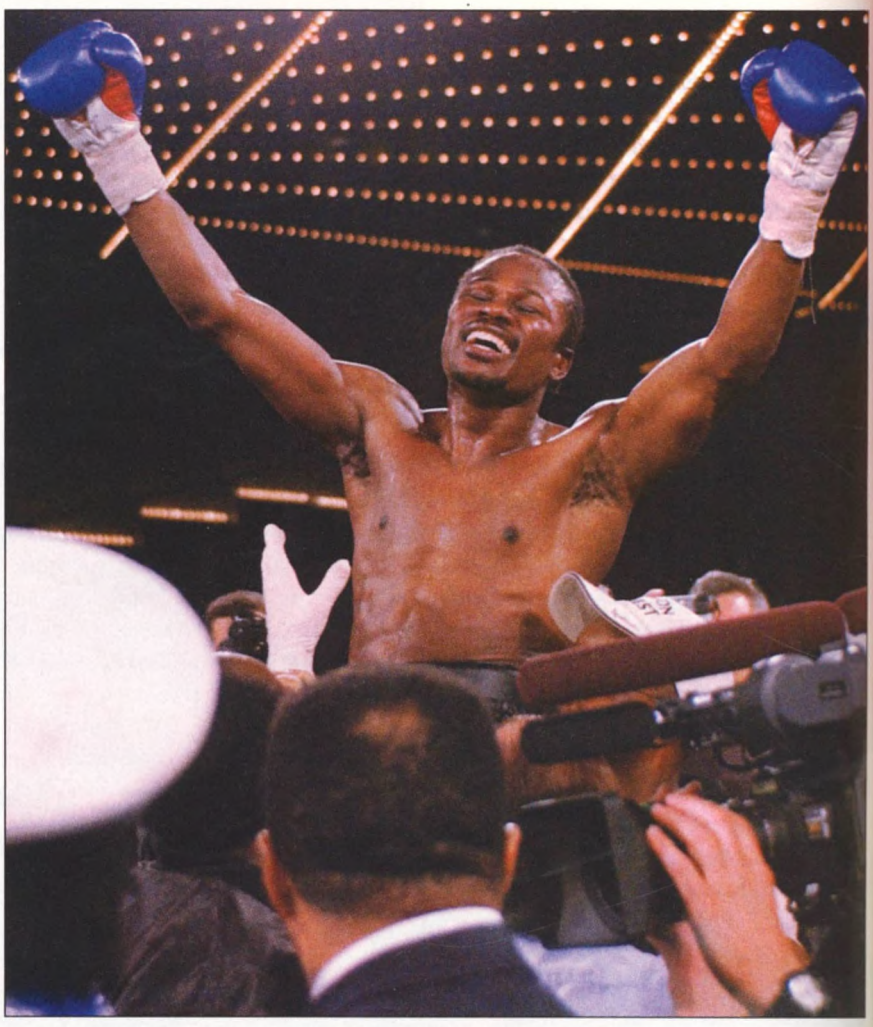
In the days immediately following the fight, Forrest was virtually euphoric, reveling in his stunning accomplishment.

"I'm so happy right now, it feels like a fairy tale going on," he said. "The last couple of days have been what I expected boxing would be when I first started out at nine years old."

That was 22 years ago, so he's well aware of how precious, and precarious, his position is.

"Throw a dog a bone, and he's not going to let it go," said Forrest. "You've got to fight him for it. I don't want to lose the taste of success in my mouth."

It has been suggested by more than a few that perhaps Forrest simply has Mosley's number. Styles still make fights, and there are plenty of historical precedents—Ken Norton-Muhammad Ali, Iran Barkley-Tommy Hearns, Junior Jones-Marco Antonio Barrera—to give weight to the theory.



Forrest celebrates after the announcement that he'd won by unanimous decision. After a decade of fighting in relative obscurity, Forrest has finally proved he belongs atop the welterweight heap.

"Certain fighters give other fighters trouble," said Merchant. "I'm reminded of Turpin and Robinson. Turpin caught Robinson at the end of a European tour, after Robinson had fought something like four times in a month. But Turpin was a strong, tough middleweight, and Ray was never a big middleweight. Then, when they fought the rematch, we saw why Turpin had given him a tough time."

Robinson, of course, rallied, blood streaming from a potentially fight-ending cut over his left eye, to starch Turpin and regain the middleweight title with a dramatic knockout. That's what great fighters do.

Mosley's measure of greatness could very well turn out to be a third match with Forrest. He certainly seemed to think so when asked about the future.

"My goal is to beat Vernon Forrest," said Mosley, making it sound as if he suddenly had a new purpose in life.

In a way, Forrest almost needs Mosley as much as Mosley needs him. Not only would a rematch be his largest payday, another victory would confirm that what he did the first time was no fluke. Maybe that's not fair, but sometimes that's the way it is. And this time, considering Mosley's status prior to the fight, it's more understandable than usual. In a way, Forrest pounding Mosley was even more shocking than Hopkins' win over Trinidad, because even though he was the underdog, Hopkins was a far more accomplished fighter than Forrest, and was considered far more dangerous.

So the epidemic of upsets continues unabated. Mr. Perfect got tuned, and Forrest is the new welterweight champion of the world. Regardless of what happens between them down the road, those pertinent facts will never change.

If you're one of boxing's major stars, you can't help but wonder who's next, and maybe give a little shudder. ■

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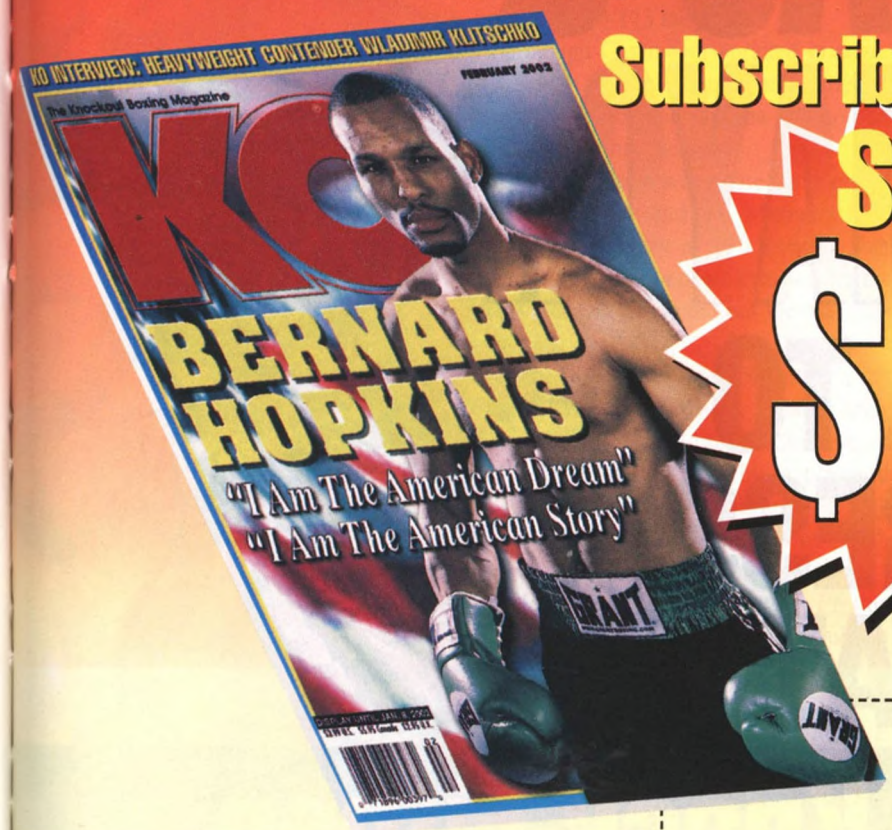

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FREITAS & CASAMAYOR FAIL TO IMPRESS MAYWEATHER:

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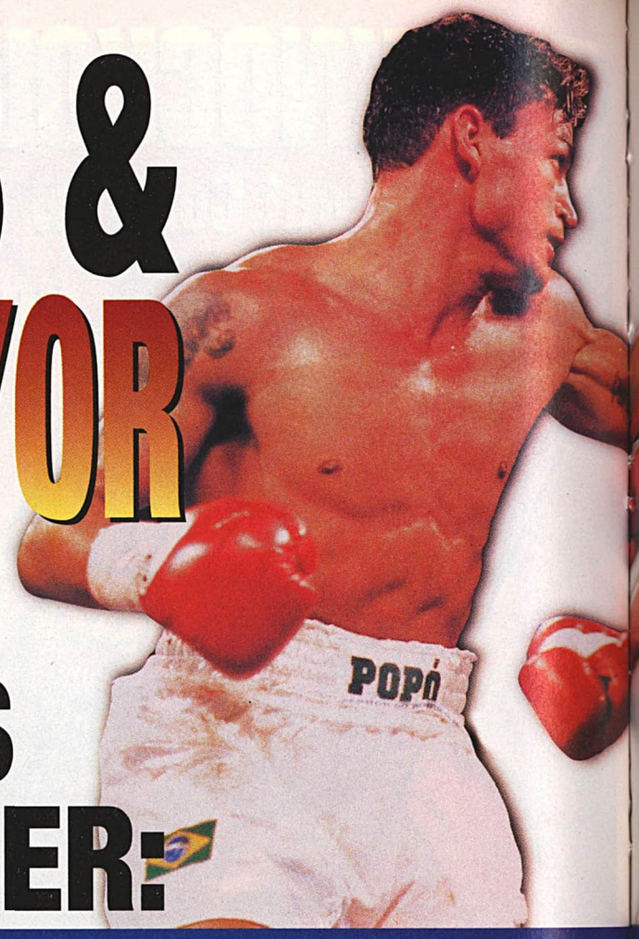

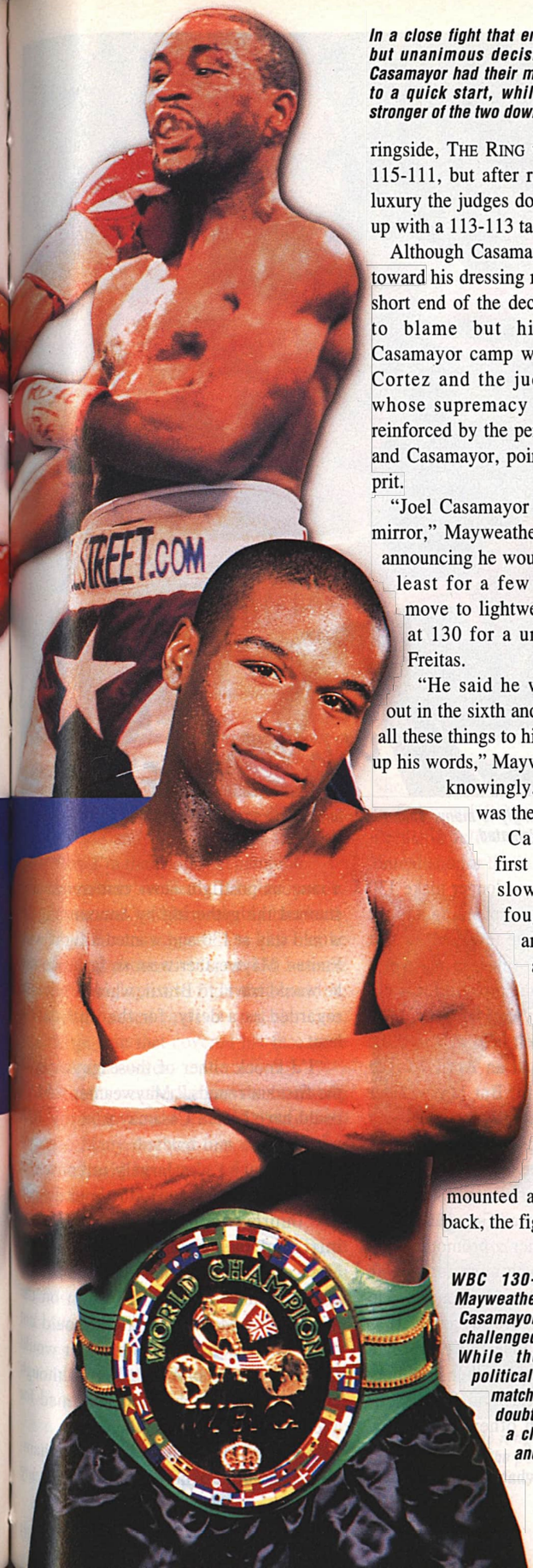

In a close fight that ended in a controversial but unanimous decision, both Freitas and Casamayor had their moments. Freitas got off to a quick start, while Casamayor was the stronger of the two down the stretch.

By Kevin Iole

PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA

Only seconds after a bruising, physical fight had ended and he'd been declared a loser by unanimous decision, Joel Casamayor hopped out of the ring at the Cox Pavilion on the UNLV campus in Las Vegas and ran at top speed toward his dressing room. As he left, Showtime announcer Steve Albert wryly noted, "That's the fastest Casamayor has moved all night."

Indeed. And if Casamayor had done more moving and less bullying in his 130-pound fight with Acelino Freitas for the WBA and WBO 130-pound titles, he might have come out with the two belts and be looking ahead to a lucrative bout with WBC 130-pound king Floyd Mayweather. Instead, Casamayor's roughhousing cost him a point for hitting on the break, put the brakes on his momentum, and cost him a unanimous decision.

All three judges—Bill Graham, Robert Byrd, and Dave Moretti—scored it 114-112 for Freitas. They had it six rounds apiece, but Freitas got the decision on the strength of a disputed knockdown call by referee Joe Cortez in the third and an equally disputed point deduction for hitting on the break in the sixth. THE RING scorecard was a pretty good indication of how tough of a fight it was to score. From ringside, THE RING went for Casamayor, 115-111, but after reviewing a replay (a luxury the judges do not enjoy), we came up with a 113-113 tally.

Although Casamayor sprinted in anger toward his dressing room after getting the short end of the decision, he had no one to blame but himself. While the Casamayor camp was heatedly blaming Cortez and the judges, Mayweather, whose supremacy at 130 pounds was reinforced by the performances of Freitas and Casamayor, pointed out the true culprit.

"Joel Casamayor needs to look in the mirror," Mayweather said, minutes after announcing he would like to abandon, at least for a few months, a planned move to lightweight in order to stay at 130 for a unification bout with Freitas.

"He said he would knock Freitas out in the sixth and he said he would do all these things to him, but he didn't back up his words," Mayweather said, grinning knowingly. "That's his fault. It was there for him."

Casamayor blew the first four rounds, starting slowly as usual. Freitas fought at a brisk pace, and while not landing any of the home runs that have caused some to call him the hardest pound-for-pound puncher in the sport, he landed far more clean shots than the Cuban.

As Casamayor mounted a second-half comeback, the fighters' roles appeared to change. Going in, it was billed as a boxer (Casamayor) vs. slugger (Freitas) battle, and that's what it was. But it was Casamayor abandoning his boxing skills and preferring to use his strength to brawl with Freitas, while Freitas, for his part, seemed content to stay on the outside, pumping his jab and following it with right hands. For most of the second half of the fight, Casamayor advanced as Freitas moved away, flicking jabs at him.

WBC 130-pound titlist Floyd Mayweather attended the Freitas-Casamayor fight and immediately challenged the winner afterward. While there might be some political problems making that match in the near future, few doubted that "Pretty Boy" is a class above both Freitas and Casamayor.

But despite the role reversals, the fight turned on two decisions by Cortez. In the third, the veteran referee ruled a knockdown for Freitas midway through the round. Casamayor was backing toward the ropes and appeared to start to slip as Freitas fired a right. Casamayor stuck his gloves out, and Freitas' punch touched one of the gloves as Casamayor tried to regain his balance. He was unsuccessful, though, and hit the floor. Cortez was positioned behind and to the right of Casamayor and thought the punch had landed. He scored it a knockdown, giving Freitas a two-point margin on all three judges' cards.

"To me, it looked like he got hit by a clean punch," Cortez said. "From my angle, it looked like a punch."

Casamayor mounted a rally in the fifth and seemed to be taking the fight over in the sixth, when he appeared to lose his cool. First, the two were in a clinch and Freitas spun around so that his back was to Casamayor. Casamayor looked at the back of Freitas' head and, inexplicably, decided to punch the Brazilian there, which elicited a warning from Cortez. Only a few seconds later, as the fighters were clinching in the middle of the ring, Casamayor hit Freitas on the cheekbone with a right hand as Cortez was breaking them. Cortez responded with a penalty.

"That's illegal and you can't allow that to happen," Cortez said. "If you watch, the one guy was stepping back and the other guy hit him."

Casamayor's camp vehemently protested the penalty. Trainer Joe Goossen said it was Freitas who hit on the break first. Replays showed that Freitas did throw a punch late in the sequence, a short uppercut as the fighters were tangled, but Cortez was still a step-and-a-half away and hadn't broken them yet. When Casamayor retaliated, though, Cortez was

Southpaw Casamayor catches Freitas coming in with a right hook. Surprisingly to many, Casamayor turned into somewhat of a brawler in this bout, while the heavy-handed Freitas did a lot more boxing than most experts anticipated.

directly in the middle. Nonetheless, the Casamayor camp howled in protest.

"That wasn't a knockdown," an angry Luis DeCubas, Casamayor's manager, said. "The referee won the fight for Freitas. He got headbutted, there were three or four things. The referee did a terrible job. How can he call that a knockdown? How could he take a point?"

Casamayor won the majority of the final seven rounds, but his little bit of machismo and his slow start came back to haunt him. Byrd gave Casamayor six of the final seven rounds, and both Graham and Moretti gave him five of the final seven. The point taken away from Casamayor turned out to give Freitas a much-needed cushion.

Freitas was hanging on down the stretch, and while he rallied and fought gamely in a 12th round that Casamayor clearly won, he showed enough vulnerabilities to gain the attention of one "Pretty Boy" Floyd.

Mayweather had complained for months that he could no longer make 130 pounds, and said he was planning a move up to lightweight, where few doubted that he would become the finest in the world in that division. But the move up was not without its perils. Mayweather was initially eyeing the WBC belt held by Jose Luis Castillo, and HBO had an April 20 date set aside for that fight. But Mayweather then decided he wanted a non-title bout first to get used to fighting at 135, and he and HBO did not see eye-to-eye on the opponent. Mayweather wanted fading veteran Alejandro "Cobrita" Gonzalez, while HBO and Mayweather's promoter, Bob Arum, wanted the much more formidable Stevie Johnston. As the sides continued to disagree, the likelihood grew that Mayweather would lose the HBO date altogether. Then Mayweather saw how vulnerable both Freitas and Casamayor looked against each other, and a new option presented itself.

He showed up at what turned out to be a raucous postfight news conference and stunned the gathering by announcing he would stay at 130 and wanted a fight with Freitas. Mayweather went so far as to say he would travel to Brazil, where Freitas is regarded as a deity, for the unification bout.

"I'd knock either of those guys out in the first six rounds," Mayweather said. "I could have beaten Casamayor in my 10th pro fight."

Freitas, who was largely unknown in the United States prior to the bout despite his impressive record, was clearly intrigued by the idea of a bout with Mayweather. A mandatory defense against Daniel Attah does nothing to turn on the juices, but a Mayweather fight would not only get the adrenaline running, it would mean huge dollars for both men. Although Casamayor and his handlers screamed for a rematch, Freitas waved them off.

"I believe Mayweather is a great champion and I'm looking forward to unifying

Referee Joe Cortez watches as Freitas lands a left uppercut on the inside. A pair of controversial calls by highly respected veteran Cortez, which favored Freitas, were very instrumental in the official scoring of the bout.

all the titles," Freitas said. "I want to fight all the best champions. Mayweather is the next in line and I'd love to see that fight go down. I'm the people's champion."

Mayweather scoffed at Freitas' punching power and said he probably hits harder. When it was suggested to him that he was talking about sticking at 130 because he saw a high-profile fight that could be easy, he insisted that was not the case. The large grin that covered his face gave him away, however.

Still, Mayweather left no doubt that he believed he would have his way with Freitas. Many doubted him a year earlier when he said he would toy with Diego Corrales, but he did just that before stopping Corrales in the 10th round.

"Corrales would kill either of these guys," Mayweather said. "They're not in that league. You saw how they looked tonight. What do they bring to the table? Freitas is just right there. He can't deal with what I have. And they try to say I can't punch. I'd like to let him see if I have power."

One major roadblock to a Mayweather-Freitas fight is that Freitas is contracted to Showtime, while Mayweather is obligated to fight on HBO. Freitas' promoter, Art Pelullo, believes that makes the fight unrealistic for the time being.

"I can see them fighting down the road at 135 pounds, but not right now," Pelullo told *USA Today*.

The odd man out in the scenario is,

Casamayor's late rally had a weary-looking Freitas under fire during the championship rounds, but a late start and the penalties were just a bit too much for the Cuban exile to overcome. Even so, many of the ringside media still scored the bout for Casamayor.

An obviously overjoyed Freitas celebrates the biggest win of his career. To his credit, the Brazilian said that he would welcome the opportunity to fight Mayweather. His promoter, however, thinks that if it happens, it will be further down the road at 135 pounds.

once again, IBF titlist Steve Forbes, who stood glumly in a corner as the media surrounded Mayweather. Next to no one recognized Forbes, who had hoped to be facing a victorious Casamayor. Now, the best Forbes can hope for is that he hangs on to the belt and that, if Mayweather-Freitas happens, the winner decides to stay at 130 long enough to fight him.

"It's a setback," Forbes said quietly of both Freitas' win and Mayweather's decision to stay at 130.

Forbes and Casamayor are both promoted by America Presents, the financially reeling company that continues to come up short in big fights. America Presents executives were banking heavily on a Casamayor win, and a loss left many wondering if the company has a long-term future. America Presents may now put the comebacking Casamayor in against Forbes with the hope that the winner could somehow get a unification fight.

Freitas, though, was hardly thinking that far ahead. The son of a lottery ticket salesman, he acted like someone who had just hit the lottery after winning the fight. Freitas grew up in abject poverty and slept on the ground until he was 16.

His punching power helped him rise out of the poverty and become Brazil's biggest sports star since Pele. His wedding last year was nationally televised and drew record ratings. He is also the country's most in-demand commercial pitchman.

The win over Casamayor ignited a wild celebration in Brazil and set in motion a chain of events that could lead to Freitas becoming one of the biggest stars in boxing—should he defeat Mayweather.

"There were a lot of people who doubted Acelino," his trainer, Oscar Suarez, said after the win. "They thought he was all about the power and that if he didn't have his power, he would be in trouble. But I told everybody, 'Forget about the power. This kid will win just by outboxing Casamayor.' And I feel the same way about Mayweather. Don't underestimate Acelino. It would be a mistake."

It would also be a mistake to think that Freitas' win over Casamayor really settled anything. There are just as many questions after the fight as there were before. Neither seemed in Mayweather's league going into the bout, and nothing either of them did in the fast-paced 12 rounds did anything to change that impression. Least of all, of course, in Mayweather's mind.

"It's easy money for Floyd, that's what it is," his manager, James Prince, said of a possible Freitas bout. "We'll have to see where we go, but if they want to give Floyd a ton of money to take a serious ass-whipping, we'll go along with them." ■

Kevin Iole covers boxing for the Las Vegas Review-Journal and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

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DE LA HOYA & VARGAS

REALLY DO HATE EACH OTHER

After a bit of verbal taunting from De La Hoya, the hot-tempered Vargas lashes out and shoves "The Golden Boy" at their first prefight press conference. The hatred between these two rivals doesn't appear manufactured at all, and that's part of what has fans so excited about their May 4 fight.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

By William Dettloff

It didn't take long. Oscar De La Hoya and Fernando Vargas weren't 10 seconds into their first face-to-face on the dais when the pushing started. Neckties flapped. Stuff went flying. Promoters, security guys, network hacks, and all manner of publicists and other hangers-on all fell over themselves and the fighters trying to make sure nobody got hurt. After all, there would be plenty of time for that later, when everybody got their checks, and then the two could hurt one another as badly as they wanted—hell, the worse the better, as long as it wasn't permanent or anything.

The drama on the stage, provided free of charge, was not a little disconcerting to those connected financially to the fight, as it occurred during the first of what may be a dozen or so press conferences the fighters attend before the actual fight on May 4. That's a lot of opportunity for the two to get at one another in their good clothes and screw everything up, if they continue to be so inclined. But to the press in attendance and to the fans that read about it everywhere later the same day, it was wonderful.

The scuffle confirmed the hope. It was true after all. De La Hoya and Vargas detest one another. At the microphone Vargas made fun of De La Hoya's tactical retreat against Felix Trinidad, for the first time to De La Hoya's face. He whined in a falsetto voice, providing his own special interpretation of "The Golden Boy." When it came his turn, De La Hoya called Vargas a "celebrity stalker," an "obsessed fan," and took a couple of shots at his arrest record: "I'll just call his probation officer" is how he said he'd handle it if Vargas bothers him up in Big Bear, where they'll both train. Coerced apparently by anger into ditching his usual placid rhetoric, De La Hoya worked the crowd to good effect. Vargas seethed and taunted and mocked. The camps and supporters heckled each other, and everyone knew that if not for their myriad minions, the fighters would be rolling all over one another looking very little like two world-class professional boxers.

Delightful.

We love the grudge match. What that says about us might not be charming, but it remains that prize fights without the full emotional, visceral commitment of the combatants are just that: prize fights. Fights undertaken solely for money. Call them contests rather than fights if you want to, because mostly the boxers don't have any real dislike for one another. They can muster some up artificially sometimes, but usually they're professionals just doing a job. We try to forget that a lot of the time, to imagine it's about something larger. (It makes more sense that way.) It usually isn't, but the fights are good anyway, so we keep watching.

Grudge matches are different. Instinctively, deep down in our pitiful caveman brains we associate joyfully the violence of fighting with high passion and malevolence and survival. So when two guys who are going to do it anyway can't stomach one another and would do it for free, it's a bonus.

Whether that resultant emotion and adrenaline transfer over into the ring—which it often does not, interestingly—is irrelevant. The buildup alone is worth the commitment, the same way it was when you were in grammar school and heard that a couple of kids you knew had it in for one another and were going to settle it after school (with their fists, quaintly enough, not a pair of .45s). The scrap itself never

Lewis-Rahman II turned into a grudge match following a TV studio brawl between the pair during the media tour to hype the fight. Some thought the dust up was staged to boost pay-per-view sales, while others felt it was genuine. Whatever the case, the incident certainly increased interest in the fight.

lived up to its promotion, but the anticipation, with all that adrenaline swirling around, was so great it was almost unbearable. Same thing with the grudge match.

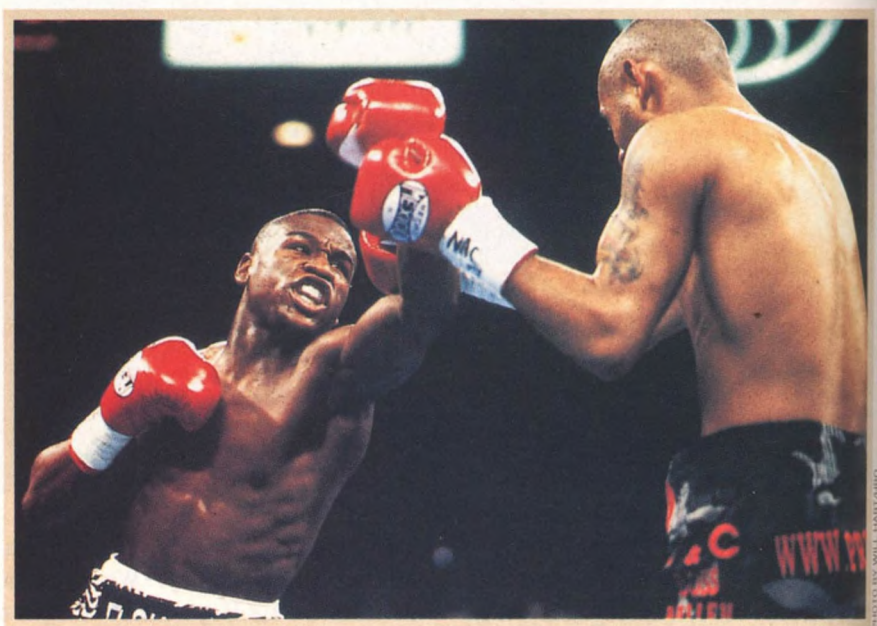
Consider the emotional appeal of the two bouts between Lennox Lewis and Hasim Rahman. Going into the first one, not a whole lot of people cared outside those directly involved, and not just because it looked like a walkover for Lewis. There was no malice, no particular grudge either way. It was a professional thing; just a job each guy had to go to that happened to be in South Africa at four in the morning. And whichever one didn't do his job as well as the other guy would end up with a concussion, which is just an occupational hazard, like carpal tunnel syndrome or black lung. This was just work—nothing to get all passionate about.

The rematch was something else altogether, and not just because Rahman had upset the odds the first time around, not because of all that baloney about the outcome defining Lewis' legacy, and certainly not because of the promotional and legal wrangling that went into it. That stuff made it an interesting fight and an important one, but it became deliciously provocative once it became a grudge match.

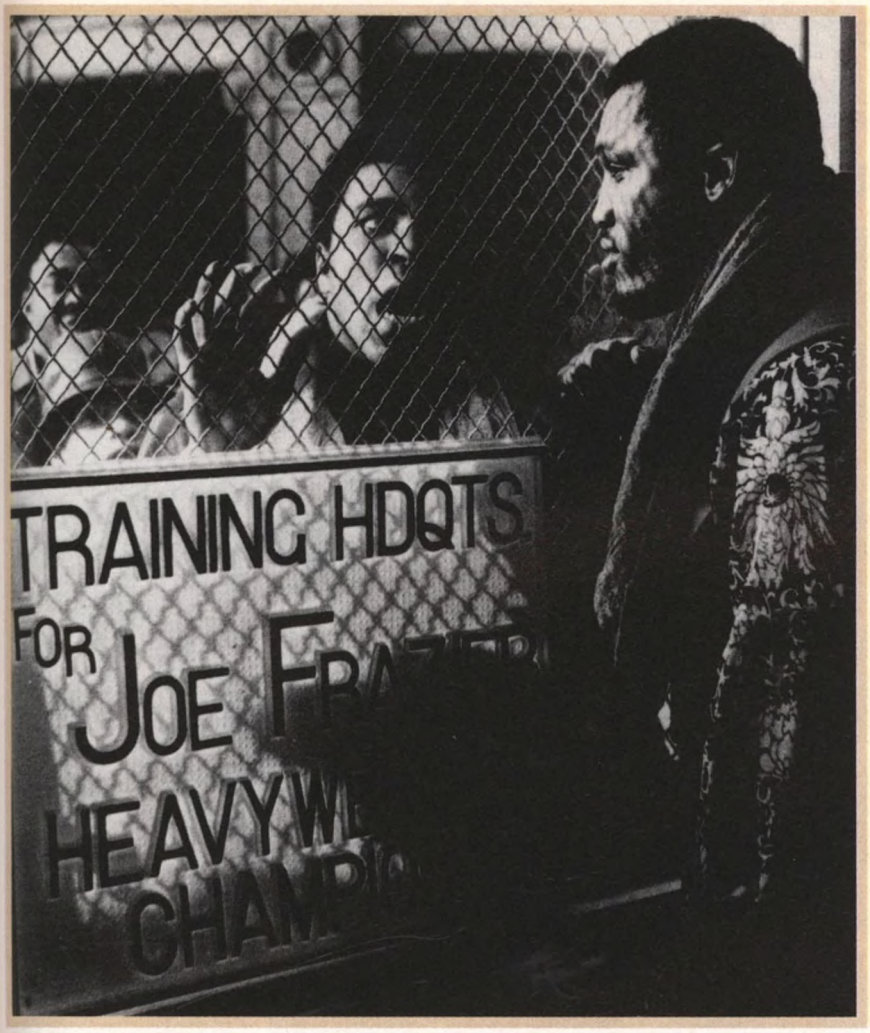
When Rahman started in with the insults and, importantly, when it became obvious that he was far better at trash-talking than Lewis—this should have come as no surprise, given that Rahman lives in America, the birthplace of trash talk—that's when it became a grudge match. When the two nearly razed an ESPN studio during a scuffle that some, but not many, mistakenly thought was orchestrated, it became a full-blown grudge match. That change increased by no small means general interest in the fight, but also the emotional weight many would attach to its outcome, especially Lewis. That's what grudge matches do, and wasn't it ironic and just that Rahman, from whose mouth it became a grudge match, was at the end probably wishing he'd kept his fool trap shut.

You couldn't blame those who thought Rahman and Lewis were manufacturing their grudge. Fighters create artificial grudges all the time, usually at the request of promoters. It's the oldest trick in the game, and most of time, what appear to be grudge matches are mere publicity stunts. A fair example is the Floyd Mayweather-Diego Corrales junior lightweight showdown in 2001. It had all the elements of a very good fight: two young, skilled, undefeated fighters at the top of the division. It didn't need anything else. But there was Mayweather, along with his manager, James Prince, telling the fight press they were offering the estranged Mrs. Corrales—whom "Chico" had criminally assaulted a short time earlier—a ringside seat. There was Mayweather's posse confronting Corrales in a Las Vegas casino, cornering him between the blackjack table and slot machines. And there was Mayweather, talking trash at every opportunity until after it was all over and he told Corrales: "Forget everything I said before—that was just to sell the fight."

When a grudge match is real, it doesn't take much to ignite it. Sometimes a fighter can start it unwittingly. Perhaps Rahman, for



Not all grudge matches are for real. Floyd Mayweather insulted Diego Corrales during the build up to their January 2001 showdown, but after stopping Corrales in the 10th round, "Pretty Boy" claimed he didn't really mean all the nasty things he said and that he was just trying to sell tickets.



Muhammad Ali offended Joe Frazier so much with his taunting that Smokin' Joe continued to hold a grudge against his most famous rival for decades after the final fight of their classic trilogy. Among other things, Frazier resented Ali's attempt to portray him as an Uncle Tom.

To Frazier, it was all about the grudge. How could it be any other way after Ali anointed him the white man's heavyweight champion, when Frazier, as he pointed out when he was in the mood, was blacker than Ali in every way? How could it be any other way when Ali called him ignorant and ugly? How could Frazier know Ali was just doing shtick and what did it matter anyway if it was? So it was the grudge that drove Frazier forward in each of the fights and especially in Manila. They all were grudge fights to him, and the grudge made him a better fighter than he would have been otherwise, at least against Ali. It also made him a bitter man, even now; grudges never expelled do that to you. But they make great fights, too.

Grudge fights rarely take shape from animosity equally shared. One guy starts it and the other one takes it up strictly in response. That doesn't make the latter's grudge any less real or potentially entertaining. But he's usually the lower-key guy, and it applies to De La Hoya and Vargas, too. Vargas' grudge burns deep and goes back, he says, to a time when both he and De La Hoya were kids doing roadwork in the mountains, and Vargas fell in a snow bank. Allegedly, De La Hoya ignored his plea for a hand and, worse, laughed at him. Whatever. Ever since, Vargas has been attacking. Probably, De La Hoya couldn't care less about Vargas and wouldn't be in the business of making this a grudge match, but Vargas started it—thank-

example, never intended to turn his rematch with Lewis into a grudge match, per se. Maybe in his world, smack-talking is what you do in a high-stakes situation with such a straight-laced guy as Lewis. But Lewis clearly took it very seriously and personally and that was enough to make it a grudge match. It doesn't always take two. The three battles Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier waged all were grudge matches to Frazier; probably none of them were to Ali, with the possible exception of the second, and that was merely revenge-motivated.

Yes, Ali needed desperately to win, especially the first match, but it didn't matter that Frazier was Frazier. Any fighter calling himself the world heavyweight champion when Ali's license was restored would have been acceptable. The name-calling, the insults, that was just Ali's shtick. Ali was in showbiz and Frazier was his straight man. He bore Frazier no real personal malice.

There's always a rivalry when a Mexican and a Mexican-American fight, but the rematch between De La Hoya and Julio Cesar Chavez became a grudge match when Chavez refused to acknowledge that "The Golden Boy" had won their first encounter fair and square.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

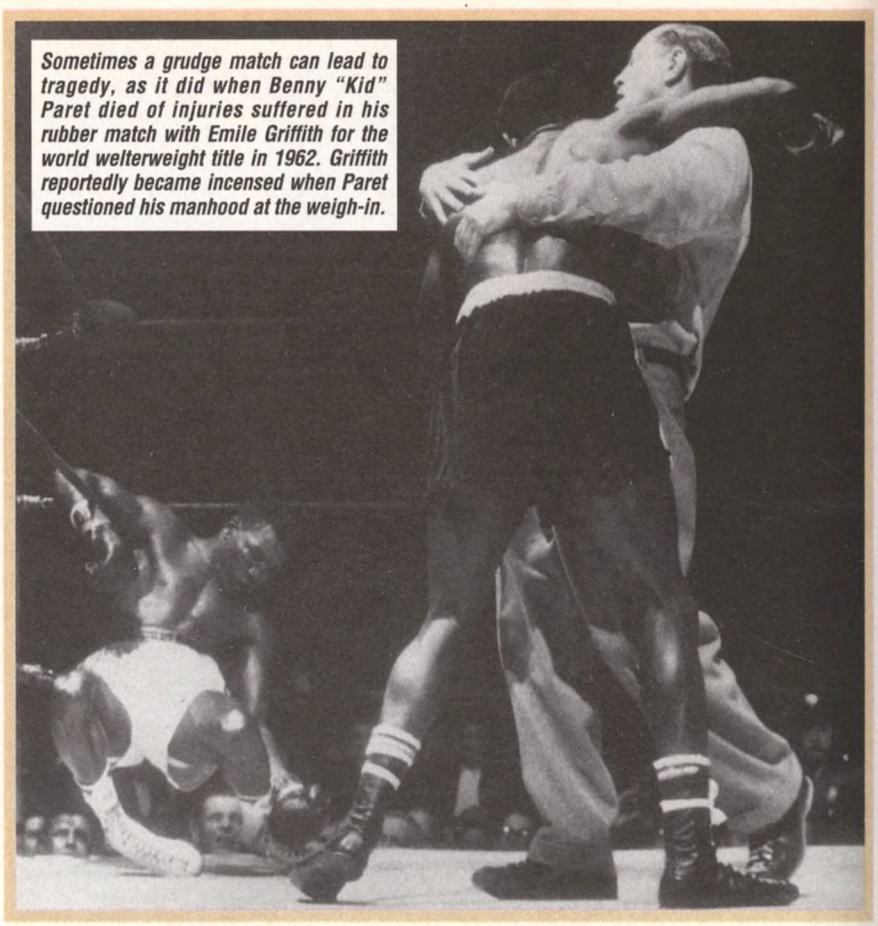
fully—and now it must be ridden to the end.

Indeed, Vargas is one of those guys who has a grudge against almost everyone he gets in the ring with—remember Ross "The Boss" Thompson and the spitting? Roberto Duran was that way, too; grudge fights with Esteban DeJesus, with Edwin Viruet, with Ray Lampkin. Some guys are like that. Anger is a big part of their game, so they invent insults and slights that they can get angry about.

De La Hoya isn't a stranger either to grudge fights, which is surprising when you consider how perfect he thinks he has to come off all the time. His second fight with Julio Cesar Chavez was a grudge match, at least in De La Hoya's mind. The genesis was Chavez' refusal to acknowledge De La Hoya's superiority after their first fight, which ended early with Chavez spewing plasma all over Las Vegas. Chavez' story was that he went into the fight with an unhealed gash over his eye, caused by his infant son, and all De La Hoya did was open it up. He claimed to be sure he'd have beaten De La Hoya if not for the cut, and that was all De La Hoya and Bob Arum had to hear. They beat the drums loud enough for all of Chavez' disciples to buy into him having a chance. They knew he was too small, too slow, and too old to beat De La Hoya. But the Chavez legions bought into it somehow, and De La Hoya wanted it. Chavez was his idol when he was a kid, but now he wanted to tear him up. Chavez seemed indifferent, probably because he knew what was coming.

A lot of observers around the game long enough to be cynical thought De La Hoya's assertions were bunk, that he took the fight because it was easy money and that was it, that he manufactured the grudge. They were wrong. When Chavez quit in his corner, again a bloody mess, De La Hoya leaped in the air and pounded his protective cup as though he had slain Mike Tyson. It seemed a little gaudy considering how overmatched Chavez was, but that's what a grudge will do to a guy.

Feeding too into the De La Hoya-Vargas grudge is ethnicity. Vargas claims he's a true Mexican and that De La Hoya is something else, and really it goes back to De La Hoya's sad and curious love/hate relationship with the Mexican community. A similar issue plays a role in another contemporary grudge fight: the rematch between Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales.



Sometimes a grudge match can lead to tragedy, as it did when Benny "Kid" Paret died of injuries suffered in his rubber match with Emile Griffith for the world welterweight title in 1962. Griffith reportedly became incensed when Paret questioned his manhood at the weigh-in.

It's true that much of the hostility between those two revolves around each one's desire to win completely the hearts and affections of the Mexican fight contingency; to fill the chasm left by Chavez' sad departure. You technically could term it a rivalry rather than a grudge fight—and there is a difference. It may have started as nothing more than that. But along the way—aided primarily by Barrera, the antagonist—it became a serious grudge match.

At a press conference in December, the fighters exchanged blows on a dais after first exchanging insults. It was the culmination of a couple of years of Barrera referring to Morales as an "Indian," an apparently derisive term meant to reference Morales' roots and background in the economically depressed city of Tijuana. Morales, normally a low-key, polite sort, has taken to countering by calling Barrera a "pretty boy," which evidently calls into question Barrera's manliness, if not his sexuality outright, depending on the translation. Of course, Morales' dubious decision win over Barrera in their first meeting contributes in no small way to what has become a serious and equally shared grudge.

Questioning the sexual preference of one's opponent is a certain way to elicit a grudge in the most macho of all games. It was the catalyst for the studio rumble between Rahman and Lewis—it was gay to take it to the courts, Rahman said to a Lewis already tired of the rumors. And it aggravated the bitter and ultimately disastrous feud between Benny Paret and Emile Griffith. Reportedly, Paret taunted Griffith by calling him a homosexual during the weigh-in for the third bout in their series. Griffith told reporters afterward that he wanted to kill Paret. It turned out that he did when he stopped Paret in the 12th round, and really never was the same fighter afterward (though in truth Paret owed his demise as much to a previous beating administered by Gene Fullmer).

Of course, we hope no such tragedy befalls either De La Hoya or Vargas, especially as a result of a grudge that probably finds its origins in nothing more than the competitive venom that runs through the veins of all the best fighters. Either way, grudges are meant to be settled, and in May, De La Hoya and Vargas will settle theirs, at least temporarily. Good for them. Better for us. ∎

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Paul Spadafora and Sugar Shane Mosley work out for the public on Museum grounds.

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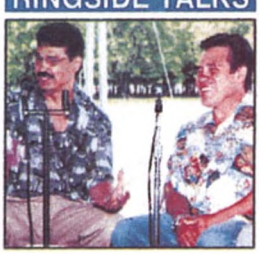

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Hagler and Leonard go nose-to-nose in a publicity shot for their classic 1987 confrontation (main photo). They met again at the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1997 (inset), but despite the smiles, Hagler is still bitter about the decision that went against him and the fact that Leonard never gave him a rematch.

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

15 Years Hasn't Taken The Edge Off

By Brian Doogan

> **"Leonard should have turned up in his running shoes that night. It was like trying to chase a rabbit down a hole. Without me pressing, we wouldn't have had a fight."**
>
> —MARVIN HAGLER

Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvelous Marvin Hagler were part of a four-way rivalry in the 1980s that ought to be commemorated by a mini-Mount Rushmore. Roberto Duran and Tommy Hearns, old "Hands Of Stone" and "The Hit Man," completed the compelling quartet, but they merely played brilliant supporting roles. Leonard and Hagler were the stars. The centerpiece of their drama was The Superfight on April 6, 1987, the Olympic golden boy from Potomac, Maryland, against the middleweight master from Brockton, Massachusetts. For one night in Las Vegas, their audience converged from the four corners of the world.

"It's 15 years ago, but it could have been yesterday," reflected Hagler, more affable and expressive now than he was at the height of his dueling powers, when working up a meanness was crucial to the character he so convincingly portrayed. Playing a doctor, lawyer, or detective is the kind of role he attempts to pull off these days, and the art of acting is a challenge that consumes him. Most days, however, he is reminded of what he was. People approach with a smile, a handshake, and a piece of paper to sign and leave with a sincerely delivered sentiment, "That fight with Leonard, we thought you won." How could he think anything other than the fight might have been yesterday? Some moments are just not governed by conventional laws about time.

Its freshness in the mind owes much to the fight delivering on expectation and stirring real controversy. Leonard's beautiful manipulation of an unenviable predicament—throwing himself into a ring Hagler habitually made into a slaughterhouse, and doing so having fought just once in five years when he performed like an impostor against journeyman Kevin Howard—was breathtaking in its audacity. Hagler was never a man to stick out your chin to, as Leonard did to rattle his mind, if you planned on eating dinner within the next two months. The fight had form, a beginning subtly secured by Leonard's hit-and-not-be-hit tactics, a middle punctuated by Hagler's onward march through his fading foe and the ever-decreasing deficit, and an end that forced both to dig deep for the breakthrough that might be decisive. Then the judges' hugely varied interpretation opened a debate that lingers. Was Leonard rightly rewarded or was Hagler robbed?

Unsurprisingly, there is little agreement still between the protagonists.

"It was my greatest accomplishment as a fighter. It was an act of defiance. I defied the odds and all perceived wisdom going into that fight," recalled Leonard, now hands-on chairman of Sugar Ray Leonard Boxing, the company he founded that promotes bouts on the first Friday of every month on ESPN2. "No one thought that a fighter who had been inactive for five years, with only one fight in the interim, which was not at all impressive, could come back to beat the man who had dominated the division for almost a decade. Only my father, Cicero, shared my belief. The night Hagler fought John 'The Beast' Mugabi, I sat next to Michael J. Fox at ringside, and I said to him, 'I can beat this man.' He just looked at me and replied, 'Ray, have another beer.'

"I believed I could do it, but after so

> **"Hagler doesn't call me on my birthday. It is something that will always be with Marvin Hagler because I took away what defined him as a man, his belt. That was who he was. It meant everything to him."**
>
> —RAY LEONARD

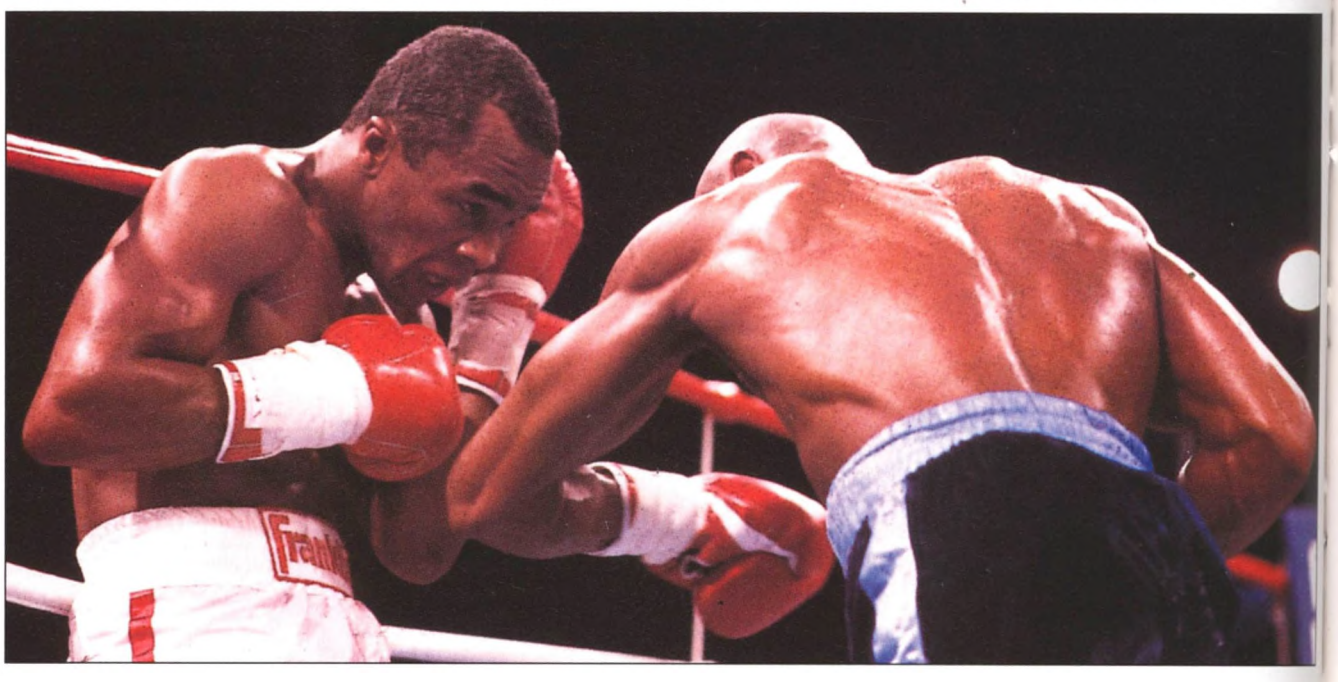
Two of the three judges were impressed with Leonard's accurate flurries (above), while the third judge and Hagler felt that the defending champion's pressure and harder shots (below) carried the day.

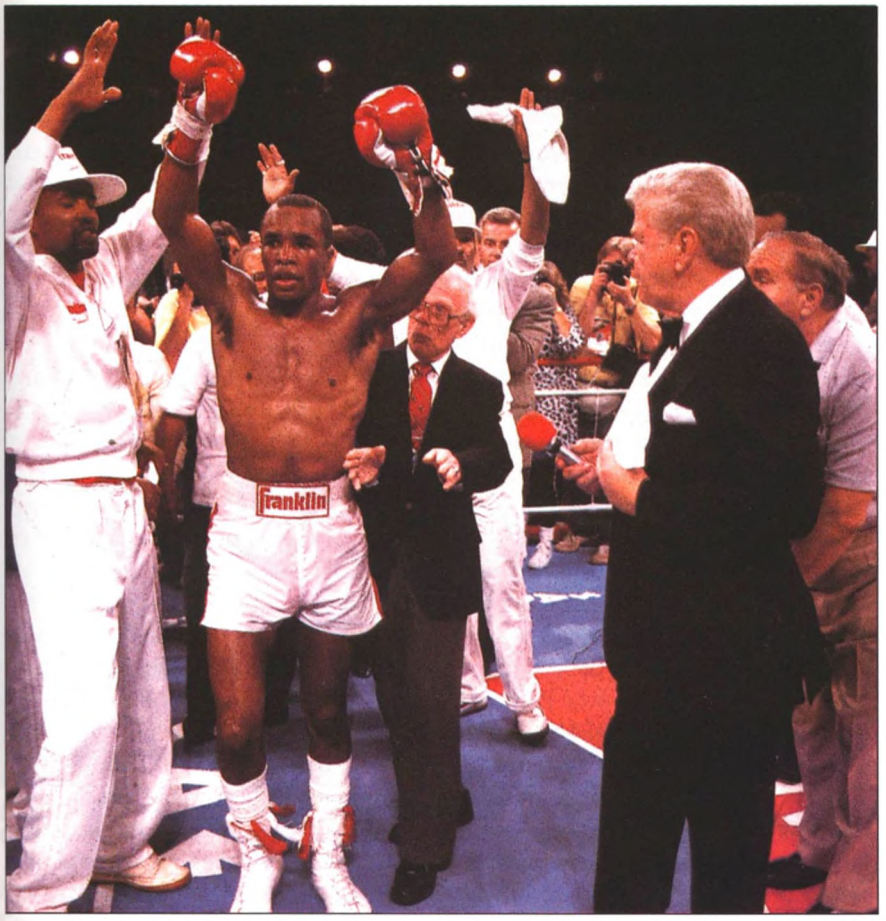
long out of the ring I did not really know. My sparring had not been very convincing. I was getting beat up by kids. In fact, only a few days before the fight I was nearly knocked out in sparring by Quincy Taylor, a young guy then who went on to win a world title. He hit me with a left hook and my legs went, and it was only my experience that prevented me from showing outwardly what I was definitely feeling on the inside. The media were watching, so to have gone down would have been a disaster. Hagler would have got to know. Everybody would know.

"On the way back that day from the gym to my residence there was just silence among my team, and I became angry. But they had seen this kid almost knock me out. They thought Hagler was going to kill me. That experience, however, was a blessing because I altered my whole strategy as a result. My game plan was to go right to Marvin Hagler, to open a cut around his eye because he was prone to cuts. But what Quincy Taylor did convinced me I could not beat Marvin that way. I had to fight a different fight, a smarter fight. So I would not have won without the help of Quincy Taylor. God bless him."

What Leonard described as a smart fight, Hagler dismissed as a betrayal of his warrior code. It is 15 years, but there has been no thaw in the ice between them.

"He should have turned up in his running shoes that night. It was like trying to chase a rabbit down a hole. Without me pressing, we wouldn't have had a fight," Hagler said from his home in Milan, the fashion capital of Europe where he lives





Leonard acknowledges the cheers of the crowd at Caesars Palace after winning a controversial split decision over Hagler. Sugar Ray feels that the victory made his legacy complete.

happily with his wife, Kay, for six months of the year. For the other six months he returns to New Hampshire. "In my heart I will always know I won the fight. Ray knows it too, but he won't admit it. In the ring when the fight was over he said, 'You won, baby.' When you look at it you can see that all the real punches were landed by me. I wasn't hurt by him once.

"You know, a little while later I went to a WBC convention and I tracked down the three judges [Lou Filippo, who scored for Hagler 115-113, Jo-Jo Guerra, who went for Leonard by a lopsided 118-110, and Dave Moretti, who sealed Leonard's victory with a 115-113 decision in his favor]. Each of them in turn said to me, 'Hey Marvin, I picked you.' Now I'm no mathematical genius, but I figure that someone got their math wrong or how could I have lost with three judges all saying they went for me! It left a bitter taste in my mouth. It finished me with boxing. The politics of the sport was something I seemed to have to battle all through my career. Even at the end, they couldn't give me a break, and no champion should lose his belt that way.

"I don't take anything away from Ray. As a challenger and the former champion he was, I had always respected him. I'd followed his rise all the way from his Olympic triumph in Montreal. But I lost respect for him after the fight. He didn't handle it like the man I thought he was. In his heart I know he knows.

"For years I had fought all the top contenders. I beat Tommy, which was my pinnacle, and Duran. I ducked no one, and being at the top all that time takes its toll. But I had one more fight in me. Ray, however, didn't want a rematch, and when I couldn't get the fight—we almost brought the commission to court to get a return fight, but he retired again—I had no desire to get in there again. I left the sport with all my faculties, didn't stay for that one fight too many, and I'm able now to pour my energy into acting and doing commentary for the BBC in Britain and a

(Continued on page 52)

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Leonard-Hagler

(Continued from page 51)

little for Italian TV, too. You move on. You do other things. You forget about it. It hasn't diminished my accomplishments in people's eyes. There's a real love when they come up to me."

The same cannot be said whenever Leonard and Hagler now meet. This is only occasional, such as at the annual Hall of Fame induction weekend in Canastota. They may be standing just feet apart, they may even be posing for the same photo. But they do not speak. Their eyes do not even meet.

"He doesn't call me on my birthday," Leonard quipped. "It is something that will always be with Marvin Hagler because I took away what defined him as a man, his belt. That was who he was. It meant everything to him. I've stayed friendly with some of my opponents. Tommy Hearns, for instance, came to my wedding a couple of years ago and showed up also for a surprise birthday party. But it's different with Marvin."

Hagler, whose quiet rage was nurtured by the poverty he was born into in New Jersey, which he channeled into a relentless pursuit of opponents and respectability through his exploits in the ring, does not see why they should be buddies.

"I never developed any love for any of my opponents and I don't think they ever did for me," he responded in jest. "Actually, I do see some of my old foes. Roberto Duran and I have got together on several occasions for charities for women with breast cancer, for children who are deprived. I was in London with Tommy Hearns to open the Kronk Gym where young, aspiring fighters will have the chance to learn from Emanuel Steward and his trainers without having to go to America. But I've moved on. I'm preparing myself, working my way up from the bottom, for the big break I hope to get one day in the movies. This is a new challenge, as it was to come and live in Italy where there's a different language to learn, a different culture. I'm really very happy with my life."

Life can be strange. If people had known one of them would remain in the game after their Caesars Palace showdown, the consensus pick would have been Hagler. But it was Leonard who could not be pried away, first by resurrecting his career—which was ended brutally by Terry Norris and embarrassingly

PHOTO BY JAY LASH

Although Hagler lives in Italy, where he is pursuing a career as an actor, he makes frequent visits back to the U.S., and is always a big favorite with the fans during induction weekend in Canastota.

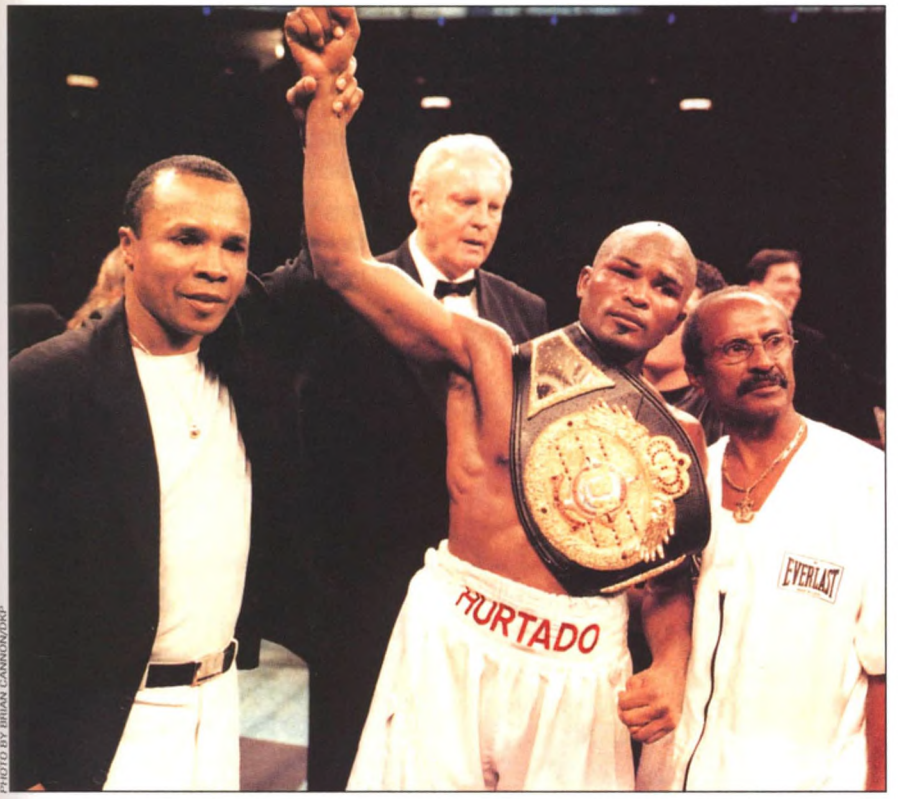

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

***Leonard, in his new role of boxing promoter, raises the hand of Diobelys Hurtado following the Cuban exile's victory over Ricky Quiles on ESPN2's* Friday Night Fights.**

by a failed comeback against Hector Camacho after he had beaten Donny Lalonde to win his fourth and fifth "world" titles, drawn with Hearns in a rematch, and decisioned Duran in their rubber match—and later by embarking on his new vocation as a promoter.

"Sugar Ray Leonard Boxing took two years to set up. It was a shared vision with Bjorn Rebney and really it's all about putting on competitive fights, which I felt weren't happening as often as they should to maintain the general public's interest in boxing," Leonard explained. "There aren't many crossover fighters around anymore, only Oscar De La Hoya, Mike Tyson, and that's just about it. Through the fights we make, I'm hoping that many more will begin to be widely known, certainly among sports fans and ultimately with most people. That's how it was in our day in the ring. That's what made the fighters of my era stand out. We all fought one another. We were warriors. We wanted to unify the titles and determine who was the best man. And boxing needs to get back to that."

The game could do also with another rivalry like Leonard-Hagler with a supporting cast the caliber of Hearns and Duran. The De La Hoya-Felix Trinidad-Sugar Shane Mosley conflict has potential, but sustained engagement is required. The Superfight and Hagler-Hearns, Leonard-Hearns, Leonard-Duran, Hearns-Duran, and Hagler-Duran endure because great fighters placed their reputation, their very essence on the line against the best competition around—one another. And you know too that deep inside it is still burning strong.

"It made my legacy complete," concluded Leonard. "My career was short-lived. I was 25 when I had to retire because of a detached retina. Because of the fighters I beat, however, I was still able to achieve something phenomenal. But it was beating Hagler that personally left me fulfilled."

Hagler's parting message was predictable: "I'm still waiting for his call. Maybe one day he'll admit it publicly, maybe he won't. Maybe he's waiting until I'm old and gray and almost blind and barely able to walk and then we can have that rematch."

Even then, some of us might be tempted to stump up the cash to ensure they have company at the ringside. ■

Brian Doogan is* THE RING'S *European correspondent.

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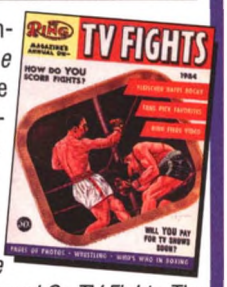

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Luan Krasniqi W 12 Rene Monse
Eliecer Castillo KO 5 Andre Purlett
Danell Nicholson KO 4 Melvin Foster
Tim Witherspoon KO 1 Ed White
Corey Sanders W 10 Terrance Lewis
Sherman Williams W 10 Al Cole
Talmadge Griffis W 10 Dale Crowe
China Smith KO 1 Mark Bradley
Derek Bryant KO 1 Jorge Luis Gonzalez
Derek Bryant KO 1 Wes Taylor
Alain Martin KO 1 Viktor Juhasz
Lionel Butler W 4 Craig Brinson
Nick Nurse KO 1 Matt Green
Michael Sprott W 8 Jermell Barnes
DaVarryl Williamson KO 5 Kevin McBride
Olanda Anderson W 4 Sean Williams

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Michael Nunn W 10 Vinson Durham
Michael Rush W 8 Larry Prather
Kenny Keene KO 2 Tony Menefee
Felix Cora Jr. W 6 Chris Thomas

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Antonio Tarver W 12 Reggie Johnson
David Telesco W 10 Julian Letterlough
Brian Barbosa KO 2 Tyler Hughes
Yawe Davis W 12 Kamel Amrane
Dennis McKinney W 12 Eric Starr
Elvir Muriqi W Disq. 5 Erin Fitchett
Joey DeGrandis W 4 Kwan Manasseh
Jacqui Frazier-Lyde KO 4 Suzette Taylor

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Oscar Bravo KO 4 Juan Carlos Viloria
Luther Smith Tech. Draw 6 Mike Tidline-El
Robert Linton KO 5 Louis Sargeant
Jerson Ravelo KO 1 Eric Olds
Jeff Lacy KO 1 Fike Wilson

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Francisco Castillejo KO 5 Xavi Moya
Tito Mendoza KO 3 Bruce Rumbolz
Bert Schenk KO 2 Stefan Stanko
Emmett Linton W 10 Rudy Lovato
Tokunbo Olajide KO 2 Marvin Smith
Gianluca Jommarini Tech. Win 7
Marco Dell'Uomo

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Jose Luis Castillo KO 8 Juan Angel Macias
(Non-Title Bout)
Angel Hernandez W 12 J.C. Candelo
Wayne Alexander KO 3 Paolo Pizzamiglio
Rafael Pineda KO 5 Jose Aponte

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Junior middleweight Wayne Alexander blasts Paolo Pizzamiglio

Nick Acevedo W 6 Kenito Drake
Fitz Vanderpool Tech. Win 8 Alex Perez
Emil Baku KO 4 Shakir Ashanti
Trevor Brown W 10 Patrick Byrd
Carlos Baldomir W 10 Paolo Sanchez
Joya Kawai W 10 Toshiharu Kayama
Joseph Brady KO 11 Chris Linson
Jeffrey Hill KO 2 Mike Jamison
Cleveland Corder W 6 Larry Banks
Jimmy Lange KO 5 Vincent White
Paul Williams W 4 Augustin Silva

WELTERWEIGHTS

Vernon Forrest W 12 Shane Mosley
(Wins Vacant World Title)
Julio Diaz KO 8 Verdell Smith
Jan Bergman W 12 Derek Roche
Christian Bladt W 12 Alessandro Duran
Cosme Rivera W 12 Hicklet Lau
Germaine Sanders KO 6 Wilfrido Ruiz
Joel Perez W 8 Fred Ladd
Jose Antonio Celaya KO 9 Fred Curiel
Mustafa Bouzid W 10 Abdelhakim Mehidi
Omar Davila W 8 Amado Navarro
Eleazar Contreras D 10 Eduardo Castillo
Ramon Olivas KO 4 Carlos Leon
Luis Collazo KO 3 Orlando Milan
Miguel Cotto KO 2 Joshua Smith

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

DeMarcus Corley W 12 Ener Julio
Ben Tackie KO 5 Teddy Reid
James Leija Tech. Win 5 Micky Ward
Arturo Gatti KO 4 Terronn Millett
Diobelys Hurtado W 12 Ricky Quiles
Omar Weis D 6 Alejandro Jiminez
Souleymane Mbaye KO 2 Jurgen Haeck
Hiroyuki Sakamoto KO 1
Muangmai Sishsobha
Ubaldo Hernandez W 10 Omar Vasquez
Oscar Diaz W 8 Jaime Morales
Ricardo Williams KO 4 Mark Adams

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Leonard Dorin W 12 Raul Balbi
(Wins WBA Title)
Artur Grigorian KO 8 Rocky Martinez
Colin Dunne W 12 Martin Jacobs
Damian Fuller KO 6 Douglas Villarreal
Justo Sencion W 8 Arnold Henderson
Shamir Reyes W 8 Terrell Hargrove
Prawet Singwangcha W 6 Renado Jonas

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Acelino Freitas W 12 Joel Casamayor
(Wins WBA Title)
Lakva Sim KO 6 Hidenobu Matsunobu

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO /HOWTIME

Featherweight Julio Pablo Chacon cracks Victor Polo to the body

Sirimongkol Singmanasuk KO 3
Rex Marzan
Kengo Nagashima W 10 Kinji Amano
Jose Miguel Cotto KO 1 Agustin Lorenzo
Fernando Trejo W 10 Oscar Galindo
Nicky Cook KO 3 Marcelo Ackerman

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Johnny Tapia KO 1 Eduardo Alvarez
Julio Pablo Chacon W 12 Victor Polo
Wayne McCullough KO 2 Alvin Brown
Julio Gamboa W 10 Moises Zamudio
Hector Velazquez KO 4 Arturo Palma
Anthony Tshehla W 12 Mkhuseli Kondile
Samuel Duran W 10 Baby Lorona
Santiago Rojas KO 1 Oscar Sanchez
Rocky Juarez KO 4 Frankie Martinez

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Salim Medjkoune Tech. Draw 4
Mustapha Hame
Debind Thapa Tech. Win 8 Omar Adorno
Gilberto Corrales KO 7 Jose Jimenez

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Veerapol Sahaprom W 12 Sergio Perez
(Retains WBC Title)
Julio Cesar Avila W 10 Jaime Ortiz
Yuji Nukaga KO 5 Taehee Choi
Cuauhtemoc Vargas KO 4 Margarito Lopez
Brahim Asloum W 6 Rodolfo Blanco

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Eric Morel W 10 Alex Baba
(Non-Title Bout)
Oscar Andrade KO 2 Carlos Madrigal
Jose Navarro KO 4 Eliseo Vela

FLYWEIGHTS

Rosendo Alvarez KO 3 David Flores
(Non-Title Bout)
Hawk Makepula KO 7 Melvin Magramo
Adonis Rivas KO 5 Javier Medina
Damaen Kelly KO 1 Simphiwe Xalebibi
Juanito Rubillar KO 4 Roel Pineda
Takefumi Sakata W 10 Mizuo Nakada
Trash Masaki Nakanuma KO 3
Saensak Singmanassuk
Glen Donaire W 6 Robert Nievas
Brian Viloria KO 3 Antonio Perez-Ontiveros

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Rosendo Alvarez KO 12 Pichit Siriwat
(Retains WBA Title)
Ivan Calderon W 8 Mike Thomas

STRAWWEIGHTS

Roberto Leyva KO 5 Frankie Soto
(Non-Title Bout)
Khulile Makeba KO 9
Mlungiseleli Xokoloshe
Eagle Okuda KO 3 Nico Thomas

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PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH

Trailing badly on points, with blood flowing from above both of his horribly swollen eyes, nobody would have faulted Leonard Dorin for backing out after, say, the seventh or eighth round of his WBA lightweight title fight with Raul Balbi. Sure, his undefeated record then vanishes and maybe he never gets another title shot. But this was virtually a lost cause, and life and limb were very much at stake. For most fighters, it would've been time to cut your losses and live to fight another day.

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

Dorin, as we soon found out, is not most fighters. Barely able to see, the Canada-based Romanian staged an improbable rally, arguably sweeping the final four rounds to win a split decision in one of the most memorably grueling fights of recent years. Would Balbi have been the Fighter of the Month if the verdict had gone the other way? Perhaps. But maybe Dorin would have deserved it regardless, for putting on the more inspiring performance and proving he has the courage to warrant his "Leo The Lion" nickname.

• • • •

Leonard Dorin

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Leonard Dorin W 12 Raul Balbi

San Antonio, Texas: Montreal-based Romanian Dorin captured the WBA lightweight crown via controversial split decision over Balbi after 12 action-packed, fiercely contested rounds at the Freeman Coliseum. This early Fight of the Year candidate was as difficult to score as it was enthralling to watch, as both fighters traded in the phone booth all night, meeting each flurry with a counter flurry.

A buzzsaw of a fighter, Dorin, 20-0 (7), initiated a slugfest and established a torrid pace from the opening bell. Balbi, of Argentina, at first seemed reluctant to engage the shorter, stockier Dorin, 134½, in the trenches, but before long resigned himself to the fact that his uncompromising foe would be in his face all night, and adjusted his fight plan accordingly.

The fighters traded fairly evenly for three rounds before Balbi, 48-5-1 (33), pulled ahead in the fourth, working his left hook overtime to open a cut above Dorin's right eye. A pair of sharp left uppercuts staggered Dorin moments later and forced him to clinch for the first time in the fight. Seizing the momentum, Balbi, 135, utilized his superior reach and hand speed to win rounds five through eight. He was usually the first and last to connect in each exchange, often catching Dorin with quick left-right-left uppercut combinations before Dorin, 31, could fire a single punch in return. While Dorin continued his relentless attack, Balbi, 28, picked his shots strategically, stepping to the side to create openings and deliver hooks and uppercuts from various angles.

But just when the defending titlist seemed to have built a comfortable lead, the iron-willed challenger mounted a rally beginning in the ninth round by increasing his already frenetic punch output. Balbi still appeared to get the better of some skirmishes, but Dorin frequently sneaked in the more eye-catching single shots—overhand rights and left hooks that jolted Balbi's skull back and sent beads of sweat spraying from his head. They were the type of punches most effective in amateur scoring, and although they did little to hurt the Argentine, they probably impressed the judges enough to secure many of the rounds for Dorin, a two-time Olympic bronze medallist.

After 12 rounds, Dorin's face was a bloody mess, while Balbi's was virtually unmarked. Referee Rafael Ramos (USA) deducted a point from Dorin in the 10th for low blows. There were no knockdowns.

Judges Gale Van Hoy (USA) and Duane Ford (USA) scored the bout for Dorin, 115-112 and 114-113 respectively. Ray Hawkins (USA) had Balbi ahead by 115-112, as did THE RING.

"It was a tough fight, but I controlled the action and landed the harder punches," said Balbi, who was attempting his first defense of the title. "Did I have to kill him to win the fight? I was robbed."

Dorin conceded it was a close fight, but said he deserved the verdict. Asked what his key to victory was, the new titleholder responded: "Pressure, a lot of pressure. I threw more punches, landed the cleaner punches, and finished stronger than him at the end. I've got to work harder now that I'm world champion."

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

Balbi and Dorin exchange uppercuts in their bloody thriller

Promoter: Lester Bedford
(1-5-02)
Television: HBO
Peter Lim

James Leija Tech. Win 5 Micky Ward

San Antonio, Texas: What was turning out to be an intriguing encounter between these two perennial tough guys with contrasting styles came to an anticlimactic and unsatisfying end when referee Laurence Cole (USA) halted the bout after five rounds. Cole acted on the advice of ringside physician Jose Coronado, who deemed a two-inch gash over Leija's right eye too serious to continue. Leija was subsequently declared the victor via technical split decision, a verdict that pleased neither fighter nor the crowd of 3,400 at the Freeman Coliseum who called out "Bulls___! Bulls___!"

"I don't feel either one of us should have been declared the winner," Leija said. "The blood was getting into my eye, but you have to keep fighting. The fight was just getting started."

Indeed, the fight was starting to heat up at the time of the stoppage. Both fighters had had their moments in a contest that pitted Leija's speed and savvy against Ward's brute power. Leija, the hometown fighter, was connecting with a higher volume of punches, while the naturally bigger Ward, though outboxed, was beginning to find the range for his heavy shots.

Leija, 43-5-2 (17) with 1 no-contest, emerged from a clinch in the first round with the cut over his eye, around which much controversy would soon swirl. Cole ruled the injury was the result of a headbutt, although he later admitted he saw neither a butt nor a punch that opened the cut.

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

Veterans Ward and Leija go hook for hook

"I thought it was a punch [that caused the cut]," Ward said. "I know I didn't headbutt him."

In the second round, Ward, 37-11 (27), began trying to outmuscle Leija and lure the smaller man into a brawl, but Leija, 138½, refused to cooperate. He fought tactically instead, peppering Ward, 140½, upstairs and down with multipunch flurries and darting out of range before he could return fire. Wary of Ward's power, Leija made himself an elusive target and rarely allowed Ward to land more than a single punch at a time.

After an uneventful third round, Leija, 35, came alive in the fourth, driving Ward to the ropes with a rapid-fire combination and then digging into the ribcage with left hooks. Gaining confidence despite his worsening cut, he began engaging Ward, 36, at close quarters and got the better of the exchanges. Looking for a Hail Mary punch, the Irishman launched haymakers designed to decapitate, most of which were off-target and were met with counter hooks and uppercuts by Leija.

Ward's bombs, particularly his vaunted left hook, began to find their mark in the fifth. Leija continued to pick Ward apart with snappy combinations, but Ward kept pressing ahead with his signature stubborn resolve. His perseverance paid off late in the round when he cornered Leija and landed the best punch of the fight—a sizzling left hook that snapped the Texan's head violently back. Never short on resolve himself, Leija quickly regrouped and unleashed a blistering flurry at round's end. Cole stopped the bout moments later, before the start of the sixth.

After five rounds, Gale Van Hoy (USA) and Ray Hawkins (USA) scored the bout in favor of Leija, by 49-46 and 48-47, respectively, while Duane Ford (USA) had Ward winning, 48-47. THE RING's scorecard favored Leija, 49-46.

"I usually start slow, but I come on in the middle to later rounds when I go downstairs," a dejected Ward said. "That's the way I fight. I was starting to get to him. He was getting tired, I could feel it."

"I think I've proven in my last few fights, since Juan Lazcano, that I'm not slipping," Leija said. "I'm only getting better."

Despite the unsatisfying end, both fighters expressed mutual respect for one another after their gloves came off. Leija even entertained the idea of a rematch in Boston, the nearest major city to Ward's native Lowell, Massachusetts. Despite having their fair share of bad luck and tough calls throughout their careers, Leija and Ward have consistently displayed good sportsmanship and are true credits to the sport. They each received $250,000 for their night's work.

Promoter: Lester Bedford
Television: HBO
(1-5-02)
Peter Lim

Bruno Girard KO 11 Robert Koon

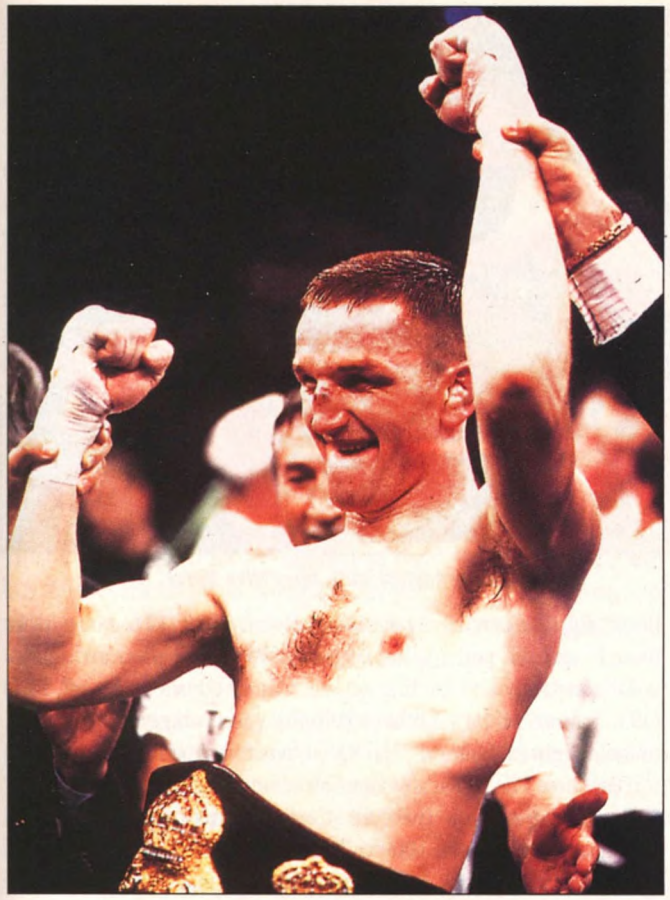
Orleans, France: With Roy Jones elevated to the status of "super champion" by the WBA, the Venezuela-based sanctioning body passed on its light heavyweight belt to Girard, 173¾, France, with this 11th-round stoppage of Koon, 174¼, Wilmer, Alabama, at the Zenith Arena. As if the proliferation of Alphabet Boys is not enough, now we have the absurdity of a single body recognizing two champions of one world at once.

He may now hold a belt, but Girard is no more a genuine light heavyweight titleholder than Mickey Mouse down the road at EuroDisney. Not only did the WBA create a title fight for him, it found him a fellow challenger who was as testing as ... well, Mickey Mouse down the road at EuroDisney. After 10 rounds, the Frenchman led the American by 100-90 on the scorecards of Mikael Hook (Sweden), Mootton Moon (Korea), and Ricardo Duncan (Panama), all three judges quite rightly awarding him every round. So much for a competitive title fight.

Despite his number-six rating—ridiculously inflated given that he had previously lost to comebacking Tony Ayala Jr. and by fourth-round stoppage to Ole Klemetsen—Koon, 24, was clearly unable to compete with the former holder of the WBA super middleweight title and a man who had boxed Lou Del Valle to a draw for this same belt last August. Without doing much, Girard, 31, stacked up the rounds, his home crowd so in need of alternative entertainment that they resorted by the middle rounds to performing the wave. In the 11th, having been the aggressor throughout though unable to land the telling blows to finish it, Girard, 39-2-2 (6), backed Koon, 29-9-1 (13), to the ropes yet again with a jab and continued a two-fisted attack until South African referee Stanley Christodoulou intervened at the 1:50 mark.

The crowd roared its approval. Girard and the WBA will have to forgive those of us who disapprove strongly.

Promoter: AB Stars Production
(12-22-01)
Brian Doogan



Girard picked up a meaningless belt

Veerapol Sahaprom W 12 Sergio Perez

Thanyaburi, Thailand: WBC bantam titlist Veerapol (who also goes by the last name Nakhonluang-Promotion), 118, kept his throne as he outpunched Mexican Perez, 118, all the way en route to a lopsided decision over 12 rounds at the Future Park. Judge Takeaki Kanaya (Japan) scored it a shutout at 120-108, while Kodai Kumazaki (Japan) had it 118-110 and Jaebong Kim (Korea) saw it 118-111, all for the 33-year-old Veerapol. The referee was Malcolm Bulner (Australia). The triumph boosted the Thailander's excellent ledger to 35-1-1 (25), while the tough loser fell to 23-10 (16).

Perez, 27, showed a tricky switch-hitting form in the first two rounds, which made the crowd feel it might be a competitive fight. But Veerapol, making his eighth defense, controlled the bout from the third round on, piling up points in almost every round. Perez showed his best in the eighth round, when he threw many jabs to take a point. But the Thailander, whose coolness earned him the nickname "Death Mask," took back the initiative and punched him with precision thereafter.

It became such a one-sided fight in the final session that Perez' only recourse was to run around and try to survive against the formidable titlist. Perez praised the victor, saying, "I didn't expect the champ to be so strong. I underestimated his ability."

Veerapol, who has now reigned for over three years, coolly said, "It was successful that I followed my manager-trainer Suchart Pisitwutinun's instructions, though Perez was a durable opponent."

The Thai veteran was slated to engage in a rematch on March 9 with Japanese southpaw Toshiaki Nishioka, who held him to a

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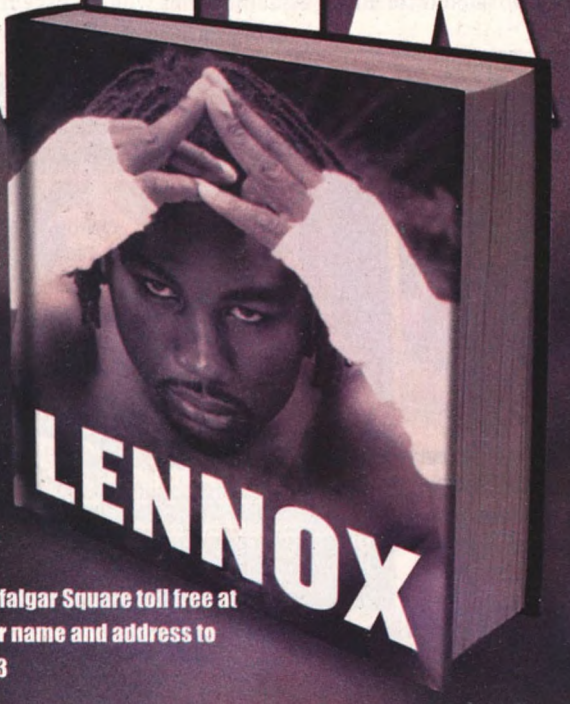

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split draw in Yokohama, Japan, last September. But Nishioka tore his Achilles' tendon while training, so it will be postponed until May or later.

(1-11-02)

Joe Koizumi

Eric Morel W 10 Alex Baba

Caguas, Puerto Rico: Despite myriad recent outside-the-ring problems, including two arrests for drunk driving, a third for resisting arrest, and a failed attempt to split from his promoter, WBA flyweight titlist Morel was as problem-free as ever between the ropes in his first pro bout in his native Puerto Rico, soundly outboxing "Ali" Baba over 10 rounds. Baba, a credible, hard-hitting foe who had unsuccessfully challenged Morel's WBC counterpart, Pongsaklek Wonjongkam, in his previous fight, was not the sort of opponent you expect to see a titleholder returning from a career-long seven-month layoff face in a non-title bout such as this. But there was no real danger for the slick Morel, who outboxed and outbrawled Baba nearly every step of the way in this moderately entertaining junior bantamweight bout.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Baba covers up against fairly aggressive Morel

Morel, 114, Madison, Wisconsin, established his jab and his distance from the outset against the shorter Baba, 113, Miami, Florida, via Accra, Ghana. A pair of straight right hands stunned Baba late in the first round, and Morel's adeptness at deflecting punches with his arms and gloves prevented Baba's retaliation from posing any serious threat. Morel, 26, began mixing in bodyshots in the second round, while Baba showed plenty of determination, taking the best "Little Hands Of Steel" had to offer and constantly pressuring him in return.

In the fifth, Morel switched to a southpaw stance, and Baba, 31, inadvertently stepped on his right foot and sent the WBA king tumbling to the canvas. It was correctly ruled it a slip.

Morel turned his offense up a notch in the seventh, opening up with both hands in pursuit of a knockout. He stood inside far more than any strategist would have advised, but even at close range he was too smooth for Baba, assaulting him with an excellent left hook, right uppercut combination. Baba, 18-3 (14), came back, though, and did perhaps his best work in the eighth, moving forward constantly and landing several clean bodyshots. Morel, 31-0 (17), dominated the ninth and 10th, however, slugging effectively to the delight of the more than 8,000 fans in attendance.

The three Puerto Rican judges all scored convincingly for Morel. Nelson Vasquez saw it 98-92, Cesar Ramos had it 99-91, and Samuel Conde scored it 100-90. THE RING scored 99-91 for Morel.

"I wanted to knock Baba out," said the winner. "I made a mistake going after the kayo. I was pressured by the crowd. I know Puerto Ricans like kayos, and that affected my style."

From a fan's point of view, it affected the style of the sometimes boring Morel for the better. After the fight, Morel said he hoped to fight either legendary junior fly king Ricardo Lopez or WBO flyweight titlist Fernando Montiel next.

Television: ESPN2

Promoter: Top Rank

(1-11-02) ■

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New Face

(Continued from page 20)

Trunov turned pro, had one fight, and then quickly reverted back to being an amateur, winning a tournament in the Czech Republic. "The amateur organizations never questioned me about my amateur status," Trunov recalled. He amassed an impressive 120-12 record as an amateur, then turned pro for good in '95.

Only one thing was missing for Trunov: fights.

After Trunov fought just once in '95, Vladimir Gutsevich, an older friend of Trunov's, suggested he try fighting in the U.S. Gutsevich knew an American lawyer and a group of backers who were in Russia looking for potential fighters to take back to the States.

"I didn't even meet the Americans who were interested," Trunov recalled. "Gutsevich said they liked me, and we started to get my paper work together to move. My wife was okay with the decision. We weren't living that well, and when America came up, I decided to jump at the chance. It couldn't be any worse than the way we were living then.

"Sometimes, I couldn't sleep at night. It was a very difficult decision, getting up and leaving everything I knew. Everything was very scary, and I was going to a big country, where I didn't know the language very good. All I knew was that I could box and was wondering how far I can go. I wanted to prove to myself that all of those years I was boxing and fighting in Russia, that all of those years were not in vain."

Trunov, who settled in the Syracuse, New York, area fought twice under the management of attorney Mike Duffy, getting a plumb start by knocking out Tom Cameron in two rounds on the undercard of the Hector Camacho-Sugar Ray Leonard show in Atlantic City in March 1997. His next fight, an eight-round decision over Earl Brown in Syracuse, was less than auspicious. According to Trunov, Duffy and his group were not pleased with how Trunov performed.

Trunov began to have doubts. Did he make the right move, uprooting his family and his way of life? Was it worth the risk?

"I questioned what I did," Trunov said. "Sometimes, you plan what you want to do, but you don't know what the consequences will be, or what will happen next. I boxed most of my life, and boxing was nothing new to me. My Russian trainers would tell me my skills weren't developed, and I could always improve if I worked hard. I had a good background. I kept telling myself that I wanted to go back to Russia. But with two kids at that time, and no place to live, I had to save enough money to move back home. When I didn't have enough, I decided to stay."

Frustrated over his lack of progress and fights, Trunov took a hiatus from boxing and obtained a job with an eyeglass manufacturer. He went from July 10, 1997, to September 28, 2000, without fighting.

"I did completely nothing," recalled Trunov, laughing. "I smoked, I lived a regular life."

Suddenly, the eyeglass company questioned Trunov's authorization to work in this country. His visa was going to run out in '99, and the immigration department began pressing Trunov to honor his visa requirements.

In late-'98, Duffy called Ramon E. Rivera, an immigration and international law attorney who once fought as an amateur under the name Ramon Estrada. Rivera was familiar with Trunov, having read about him in a local newspaper. Rivera helped Trunov with his immigration papers, and eventually took over Trunov's management responsibilities from Duffy.

"There are a lot of parallels between me and Andre, and that's why I wanted to take him on," Rivera said. "Andre is a person I felt just needed an opportunity. Andre wasn't too pleased with what was going on with his career before I came into the picture, and it took him some time to trust me. I came out of the blue and I helped him with his immigration stuff. Andre's story really interested me. At the time, he was inactive, he had two kids and a wife.

"Andre's fighting for the American dream, at the risk of sounding corny. We take our rights to be here, our privileges of being Americans, for granted. This guy is truly fighting to stay here. Andre is a very intelligent guy who has a bachelor's degree in physical education and should be allowed to stay here and obtain a green card, based on his skills."

Rivera's first priority was to get Trunov fights. It's taken some time, but Trunov's career is just starting to pick up momentum. Trunov made possibly the biggest argument for his cause on November 30 against talented prospect Calvin Green at the Park Hyatt at the Bellevue, in Philadelphia. Trunov knocked down Green in the first round and scored an impressive eighth-round kayo that caused many at ringside to wonder who exactly Trunov was. Right after the fight, J Russell Peltz signed Trunov to a promotional contract, with the potential for future TV fights.

"I remember Russell asking me what I thought of Trunov, and I told him I thought Trunov was someone who could develop into a spot somewhere," recalled Teddy Atlas, ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* ringside analyst. "I remember that Trunov was awkward and he was European, but he didn't fight like a European. He had a nice, pleasing American style. He also looked like he had a fighter's mentality. He had some physical strength to him, and he looked like he was comfortable going inside or outside. He had the instincts and thoughtfulness on the outside to counter, too."

With Rivera and Peltz now in his corner, Trunov feels the chances of one day receiving a green card are becoming stronger. Though he still lives with the feeling that he has to win at all costs, Trunov is finally content with his decision to move to the U.S.

"I trust people now," Trunov said. "There was a time when I didn't trust people. Everyone was talking about helping me, and made me think they were going to do something for me, but they didn't. For three or four years, they did nothing for me.

"I have a responsibility not to let the people around me down. I'd like to get the green card so I could visit Russia and see my family. I haven't seen them in six years. When I start thinking about them, it's difficult. I'd like to eventually become a United States citizen. I'm more comfortable with the language, and I have good friends. I know a lot of things have changed in Russia and the Ukraine, but I'm used to America now. I'm living better. I'm fighting to live this way." ■

BACK ISSUES OF KO

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June 1983: WBA Jr. Middleweight Champion Davey Moore: Bracing For Duran's Last Stand. Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Pinklon Thomas. Also: Duran-Cuevas, Hagler-Sibson.

Aug. 1983: Michael Spinks: King Of The Light Heavyweights ... But The Glory Can't Erase The Sadness. Color Pinup: Johnny Bumphus. Interview: Jones & Rappaport. Also: Jones-McCrory, Pryor-Arguello II preview, world's best fighter poll, Jeff Chandler, Mark Breland, Leon Spinks.

Oct. 1983: Is Larry Holmes Finished? Color Pinup: Greg Page. Interview: Marvis Frazier. Also: Marvin Hagler, Bobby Chacon, Jack Dempsey.

Aug. 1984: WBC Heavyweight Champion Terrible Tim Witherspoon: A Superstar Of Tomorrow? Color Pinup: Rocky Lockridge. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: Marvin Hagler, Gomez-LaPorte.

Oct. 1984: Golden Boy Mark Breland: Can He Be The Next Sugar Ray? Color Pinup: Jaime Garza. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Bramble-Mancini, Sugar Ray Leonard.

Nov. 1984: Thomas Hearns: "Hagler Is Shakin' Like A Leaf On A Tree!" Color Pinup: Tim Witherspoon. Interview: Livingstone Bramble. Also: Rosario-Davis, Marlon Starling.

Jan. 1985: The Wide-Open Heavyweight Division: Who Will Take Control? Color Pinup: Bill Costello. Interview: Tyrone Crawley. Also: Harry Arroyo, Curry-Pryor, Barry McGuigan.

Feb. 1985: Gerry Cooney: How Far Can He Go This Time? Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Ray Mancini. Also: Dream fights, Hector Camacho.

March 1985: Next For Marvelous Marvin Hagler: The Only Fight That Really Matters. Color pinup: Mike McCallum. Interview: Thomas Hearns. Also: Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza, Holmes-Bonecrusher.

May 1985: Thomas Hearns: KO Fighter Of The Year. Color Pinup: Gerry Cooney. Also: Camacho-Ramirez, Truth Williams, Year In Review.

July 1985: Aaron Pryor: Has Hawk Time Run Out? Color Pinup: Donald Curry. Interview: Greg Page. Also: Ray Mancini, James Shuler, Costello-Hatcher.

Aug. 1985: King Cobra: "Hagler-Hearns Is Done And I'm Better Than Both Of Them!" Color Pinup: John Mugabi. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Larry Holmes, Roberto Duran, DeWitt-Lee.

Dec. 1985: Pinklon Thomas: "Larry Holmes Betrayed Boxing." Color Pinup: Hagler-Mugabi. Also: Mike McCallum, Tyrell Biggs, Camacho-Ramirez.

Jan. 1986: Macho Mania! Hector Camacho Takes Aim At 10 Tough Targets. Color Pinup: Jimmy Paul. Interview: Alexis Arguello. Also: Truth Williams, Curry-McCrory.

July 1986: Tyson, McGuigan, Hagler: The Stars Catch Fire And Boxing Is Hot Again! Color Pinup: Azumah Nelson. Also: Camacho-Chavez.

Dec. 1986: Larry Holmes' Message To Mike Tyson: "Show Me You Can Kick My Butt!" Color pinup: Mark Breland. Interview: Holmes. Plus: Witherspoon-Bruno, Evander Holyfield, Cruz-McGuigan, Danny Lopez.

Feb. 1987: Upset Of The Decade: Has Honeyghan Cut Short The Curry Era? Color Pinup: Marvin Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Edwin Rosario, Hector Camacho.

Aug. 1987: Sweet Victory! Sugar Ray Humbles Hagler. Color Pinup: Leonard vs. Hagler. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Spinks-Cooney preview, Donald Curry.

Oct. 1987: Greatness Beckons: When Will Mike Tyson Answer The Call? Color Pinup: Michael Olajide. Interview: Tyrell Biggs. Also: Paz-Haugen, Marvin Hagler.

Nov. 1987: Michael Spinks: The War With Tyson Is Okay With Him. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Frankie Duarte. Also: Matthew Hilton, Hagler-Czyz.

Dec. 1987: Mike Tyson: Undisputed Heavyweight King-But Is He Losing His Loyal Subjects? Color Pinup: Matthew Hilton. Interview: Barry McGuigan. Also: Aaron Pryor, Mike McCallum.

Jan. 1988: The Collapse Of A Hero: Why Breland Never Hit The Mark Of Greatness. Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Michael Nunn, Alexis Arguello, lightweights.

Feb. 1988: Pazienza & Haugen Go For Each Other's Throats. Color Pinup: Marlon Starling. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Tate-Olajide, ESPN Boxing.

May 1988: KO Exclusive-Mike Tyson, As Only Mike Tyson Knows Him. Color Pinup: Mike McCallum. Interview: Thomas Hearns. Also: Tyson-Spinks Poll, Michael Dokes, Virgil Hill.

July 1988: Superfight History Dictates: Don't Expect The Expected From Tyson-Spinks. Color Pinup: Roger Mayweather. Interview: Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Also: Roberto Duran, Azumah Nelson, Barkley-Olajide.

Aug. 1988: Tyson-Spinks: KO's Fearless Forecast Of Superfight '88. Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Matthew Hilton. Also: Lockridge-Knight, Evander Holyfield, Lloyd Honeyghan.

Sept. 1988: Tyson-Spinks, The Aftermath—What If Tyson Wins; What If Spinks Wins? Color Pinup: Frank Tate. Interview: Marlon Starling. Also: Barry McGuigan, Simon Brown, risk-taking.

Oct. 1988: Middleweight Terrorism: Iran Bombs The Hit Man. Color Pinup: Don Lalonde. Interview: Frank Bruno. Also: Roger Mayweather, Marvin Hagler.

Jan. 1989: The Troubled Times Of Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Lloyd Honeyghan. Interview: Gil Clancy. Also: Meldrick Taylor, Jeff Fenech, Boxing's Champs.

Feb. 1989: George Foreman Is Born Again. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Bill Cayton. Also: The Olympics, Davey Hilton, John Mugabi, Barry McGuigan.

Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams. Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

Nov. 1989: The Real Duran; The Stories Behind The Legend. Color Pinup: Orlando Canizales. Interview: Mike Trainer. Also: Edwin Rosario, Rosi-Van Horn.

Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multimillion-Dollar Shot At Tyson. Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

May 1990: Chavez vs. Taylor: The Best Matchup In The Last Five Years. Color Pinup: Daniel Zaragoza. Interview: Pernell Whitaker. Also: Leonard-Hearns, Glenn McCrory, Prince Charles Williams.

June 1990: A Sugar-Free Future? Thomas Hearns Is Looking Up. Color Pinup: Glenn McCrory. Interview: Michael Moorer. Also: Matthew Hilton, Molina-Suarez, Foreman-Cooney, Camacho-Paz.

July 1990: KO Interview-Sugar Ray Leonard. Color Pinup: Jorge Paez. Also: Michael Nunn, Buster Douglas, Jibaro Perez, the Olympians.

Aug. 1990: Meldrick Taylor: Brilliance In Defeat. Color Pinup: Buster Douglas. Interview: Teddy Atlas. Also: Buddy McGirt, Dokes-Ruddock, Simon Brown.

Sept. 1990: KO Interview-Buster Douglas. Color Pinup: Macho Camacho. Also: Thomas Hearns, Nigel Benn, Greg Haugen, Boxing Hall of Fame.

Oct. 1990: Send In The Clown: Is Jorge Paez A Phenom Or A Fraud? Color Pinup: Paul Banke. Interview: Tony Lopez. Also: Chavez-Taylor II, Jesse Benavides.

Nov. 1990: The Comeback Of Mike Tyson: A Crooked Course Straight To The Top. Color Pinup: Tony Lopez. Interview: Don Dunphy. Also: Davis-Breland, Riddick Bowe, federal commission.

Dec. 1990: The Heart Of The Matter: Who Will Survive The Holyfield-Douglas War? Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Michael Carbajal, Ruelas Brothers, Best Fighter Poll.

Jan. 1991: Macho Ado About Nothing? Why Hector Camacho Wants To Be Believed. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Irving Rudd. Also: Sugar Ray Leonard, Orlando Canizales, Vinny Pazienza.

Feb. 1991: 10 Fighters To Fear: Boxing's Most Destructive Hitters. Color Pinup: Razor Ruddock. Interview: Ray Mercer. Also: Roberto Duran, Saoul Mamby, Mills Lane, Sugar Ray Robinson.

May 1991: Ruddock Eyes The Big Upset Of Tyson. Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Jeff Fenech. Also: Virgil Hill, Pernell Whitaker, Alex Ramos, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt.

June 1991: Exclusive KO Interview: Evander Holyfield. Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, Chavez.

July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ? Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With. Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb. Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson-The Only Heavyweight That Matters. Color Pinup: Thomas Hearns. Interview: Troy Dorsey. Also: Fenech-Nelson, James Toney, lost art of bodypunching.

Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield-The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight. Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman. Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

March 1992: KO Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star. Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67. Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer? Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide ... Or A Reason For Pride? Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

Aug. 1992: Bowe Knows The Big Fight: The Top Contender Analyzes Holmes-Holyfield. Color Pinup: Julian Jackson. Interview: Michael Spinks. Also: Thomas Hearns, Blue Horizon, fighting fear, Toney-Barkley, Greg Haugen.

Sept. 1992: Can Tommy Morrison Punch Out The Theory ... White Men Can't Fight. Color Pinup: Welcome Ncita. Interview: Ken Norton. Also: Reggie Johnson, Jimmy Paul, McGirt-Blocker, Ali-Shavers.

Oct. 1992: The Olympics: Golden Memories ... And Golden Futures? Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

Nov. 1992: Foreman vs. Holmes: The Fight Evander Holyfield Should Have Prevented. Color Pinup: Iran Barkley. Interview: Joey Gamache. Also: Hector Camacho, Tracy Patterson, Rudy Zavala.

Dec. 1992: The Final Four: Ruddock vs. Lewis, Holyfield vs. Bowe. Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: Whitaker-Pineda, Bowe-Coetzer, Alex Stewart, Gamache-Lopez.

Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win and Why. Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

March 1993: Not Just Another English Muffin: Lennox Lewis Powers His Way Toward The Title. Color Pinup: Leeonzer Barber. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Reggie Johnson, Lopez-Gamache, USA Network.

May 1993: Recapping The Future: Julio Cesar Chavez' Road To 100-0. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Junior Jones. Also: Buddy McGirt, Riddick Bowe, Raul Marquez.

Dec. 1993: The KO Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis. Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

July 1994: The Upset Epidemic! Carbajal's Conqueror: Chiquita Gonzalez. Color Pinup: Junior Jones. Interview: Rafael Ruelas. Also: Jake Rodriguez, Czyz-Hearns preview, Randall-Chavez II preview.

June 1995: The Tug-Of-War Over Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Wilfredo Vasquez. Interview: Oliver McCall. Plus: Alejandro Gonzalez, Alexis Arguello, Kostya Tszyu.

March 1996: Whether He Fights Or Not ... Tyson Is Hot! Hot!! Hot!!! Color Pinup: Marco Antonio Barrera. Interview: Jose Sulaiman. Plus: Reggie Tuur, heavyweight prospects, champion's edge.

June 1996: Destined For The Hall Of Fame: Who's In, Who's Out. Color Pinup: Wayne McCullough. Interview: Cedric Kushner. Plus: Danny Romero, Mark Breland, Dynamite Dozen—the next 12.

July 1996: Awesome Again! Tyson Destroys Bruno. Color Pinup: Tyson-Bruno. Interview: Christy Martin. Plus: Chavez-De La Hoya preview, Derrick Gainer, '96 Hall of Fame inductees.

Sept. 1996: Tyson vs. Seldon. Don't Bet On This Fight Until You've Read This Story! Color Pinup: Arturo Gatti. Interview: Butterbean. Plus: Dana Rosenblatt, '92 Olympians, McGuigan-Pedroza.

Nov. 1996 (Special 88-Page Edition): The

***KO* 100.** Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Bob Arum. Plus: Roy Jones, Roberto Duran, Joe Cortez.

Dec. 1996: Andrew Golota—Taking The Low Road to Stardom. Color Pinup: Mark Johnson. Interview: Rock Newman. Plus: De La Hoya-Gonzalez, Chuck Bodak, bizarre endings, Chavez-Rosario.

Winter 1996: This Is War! Holyfield-Tyson Will Be Explosive ... And Short. Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Plus: Riddick Bowe, David Reid, Holyfield-Qawi.

Jan. 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Bowe-Golota II: Hatred And Vengeance ... It's A Beautiful Thing! Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Lou Duva. Plus: Mouse Strauss, heavyweight rematches, Azumah Nelson.

Feb. 1997: KO's 1997 Wish List. Color Pinup: Ike Quartey. Interview: Naseem Hamed. Plus: David Tua, Felix Trinidad, Adolpho Washington, Bobby Czyz.

March 1997: Holyfield's Trainer Tells All! An Inside Look At The Upset Of The Year. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Plus: George Foreman, Lupe Pintor, boxing bill, Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Plus: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

Sept. 1997: A Legitimate Grudge Match! Why Romero-Tapia Could Be The Fight Of The Year. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: David Tua. Plus: Ike Quartey, George Foreman, top promoters.

Nov. 1997: Filling In The Missing Pieces: What "The Bite" Means To Boxing. Color Pinup: Christy Martin. Interview: Jim Lampley. Plus: Vince Phillips, British prospects, Iran Barkley.

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Holiday 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Holyfield-Moorer II: Can Evander Avenge His Ugliest Defeat? Color Pinup: Vince Phillips. Interview: Mills Lane. Plus: Roy Jones, Baby Jake Matlala, Boxing 2000.

Jan. 1998: De La Hoya Humbles The Macho Man: "Oscar's The Best I've Ever Fought." Color Pinup: William Guthrie. Interview: Mark Johnson. Plus: Johnny Tapia, Pinklon Thomas, defense.

Feb. 1998: Is Lennox Lewis The World's Best Heavyweight? Color Pinup: Charles Brewer. Interview: Marc Ratner. Plus: Otis Grant, Arturo Gatti.

March 1998: Evander Holyfield: For The Real Deal, Lewis Is No Big Deal. Color Pinup: Lou Del Valle. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Plus: David Izon, Meldrick Taylor, rapid weight loss.

May 1998: Living Up To The Hype: Sometimes They Do ... Sometimes They Don't. Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Best Of ... (Part III). Plus: Naseem Hamed, Marty Denkin, women's boxing.

June 1998: Lewis vs. Holyfield:
Why The Fight Of The Year Isn't Going To Happen. Color Pinup: Evander Holyfield. Interview: Eddie Futch. Plus: Hector Lizarraga, pain, Head-To-Head review.

Aug. 1998: Lewis Bombs Out Briggs: Would The WBC Champ Do This To Holyfield? Color Pinup: Keith Mullings. Interview: Shane Mosley. Plus: Pernell Whitaker, Marco Antonio Barrera, Roberto Garcia.

Sept. 1998: Can Mike Tyson Make A Successful Comeback? Sugar Ray Leonard Has The Answer. Color Pinup: Michael Grant. Interview: Brad Jacobs. Plus: Naseem Hamed, Wayne McCullough, Kirk Johnson.

Oct. 1998: The Ultimate Fantasy Card. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: Roy Jones. Plus: Brendan Ingle, NYPD boxing, prospect blueprint.

Nov. 1998 The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Tim Austin. Plus: Cesar Bazan, Spencer Oliver, Bobby Czyz.

Dec. 1998: Winning Fights Is Easier Than Winning Fans: Why Can't We Appreciate Roy Jones? Color Pinup: Tim Austin. Interview: Michael Grant. Plus: Christy Martin, Ali Reform Act, one-hit wonders.

Holiday 1998: Toe-To-Toe With The Top 10: Where Does Tyson Fit In? Color Pinup: Shane Mosley. Inteview: Larry Hazzard. Plus: Evander Holyfield, junior middleweights.

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June 1999: Will Tyson's Jail Time Be A Career Killer? Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Floyd Mayweather. Plus: Roy Jones, 1999 Hall of Fame, stagnation.

July 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: The Fight The Public Demands ... But Is It Going To Happen? Color Pinup: David Tua. Interview: Tommy Brooks. Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Tony Marshall, best of the century.

Aug. 1999: Lewis vs. Holyfield II: Should We Expect Anything Different Next Time? Color Pinup: Fernando Vargas. Interview: David Reid. Plus: Ibeabuchi-Byrd, Melissa Salamone.

Sept. 1999: Mayeather vs. Mosley: Who's The Future Of Boxing? Color Pinup: James Page. Interview: J Russell Peltz. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Thomas Hearns, Angel Manfredy.

Oct. 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Felix Trinidad. Interview: Jake LaMotta. Plus: Tony Ayala, Erik Morales, Junior Jones.

Nov. 1999: De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: "It's Gonna Come Down To Who The Hell Wants It Most!" Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Arturo Gatti. Plus: Roy Jones, Sugar Shane Mosley, Vassily Jirov.

Dec. 1999: David Reid & Fernando Vargas: Olympic Teammates On A Collision Course! Color Pinup: Zab Judah. Interview: Ike Ibeabuchi. Plus: Vitaly Klitschko, Antonio Tarver, Mike Tyson.

Holiday 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): Lewis-Holyfield II: Why We Demand A Knockout! Color Pinup: Sharmba Mitchell. Interview: Paulie Ayala. Plus: James Toney, James Page & Terronn Millett, decade review.

Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Plus: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Plus: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Plus: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win ... And Why. Color Pinup: Vitaly Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Plus: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Plus: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Plus: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

Sept. 2000: Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Plus: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

Oct. 2000 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Floyd Mayweather. Interview: Stevie Johnston. Plus: Clifford Etienne, over-hyped heavyweights.

Nov. 2000: Sugar Rush! Mosley Achieves Superstardom At Oscar's Expense. Color Pinup: Lennox Lewis. Interview: Jay Larkin. Plus: David Tua, Oleg Maskaev, Ben Tackie.

Dec. 2000: Mike Tyson vs. Lennox Lewis: 15 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Shane Mosley. Interview: Frank Maloney. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Bronco McKart, our heroes' heroes.

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Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Plus: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua ... But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

June 2001: Trinidad-Jones: Superfight Or Mismatch? Interview: Virgil Hill. Plus: Mayweather-Corrales, Paul Ingle, Davey Hilton, Tyson's relationship with Vargas, Judah, and Mayweather.

Aug. 2001: Sugar Shane Mosley: Too Sweet For The Bad Boy Era? Interview: Richard Steele. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones, Jesus Chavez.

Oct. 2001: Tito Power—From Fans To Foes ... Everyone's Feeling It! Interview: Lou DiBella. Plus: Hasim Rahman, Vargas-Rivera, F.I.S.T.

Dec. 2001: Laila Ali: The Fighter, The Sex Symbol ... The Future Of Women's Boxing? Interview: Laila Ali. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Tim Austin, Manny Pacquiao, Hector Camacho Jr.

Feb. 2002: Bernard Hopkins: "I Am The American Dream. I Am The American Story" Interview: Wladimir Klitschko. Plus: Omar Sheika, Vernon Forrest, Juan Lazcano.

April 2002: After Hitting Rock Bottom ... Lennox Is Back On The Path To Greatness. Interview: Duva Boxing. Plus: Zab Judah, Mike Tyson, Thomas Tate.

❑ JUN/83	❑ AUG/88	❑ DEC/91	❑ MAR/97	❑ NOV/99
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❑ FEB/85	❑ NOV/89	❑ AUG/92	❑ FEB/98	❑ MAY/00
❑ MAR/85	❑ FEB/90	❑ SEP/92	❑ MAR/98	❑ JUN/00
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❑ JUL/86	❑ OCT/90	❑ MAY/93	❑ NOV/98	❑ DEC/00
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❑ FEB/87	❑ DEC/90	❑ JUN/95	❑ HOL/98	❑ APR/01
❑ AUG/87	❑ JAN/91	❑ MAR/96	❑ JAN/99	❑ JUN/01
❑ SEP/87	❑ FEB/91	❑ JUN/96	❑ FEB/99	❑ AUG/01
❑ OCT/87	❑ MAY/91	❑ JUL/96	❑ MAR/99	❑ OCT/01
❑ NOV/87	❑ JUN/91	❑ SEP/96	❑ MAY/99	❑ DEC/01
❑ DEC/87	❑ JUL/91	❑ NOV/96	❑ JUN/99	❑ FEB/02
❑ JAN/88	❑ AUG/91	❑ DEC/96	❑ JUL/99	❑ APR/02
❑ FEB/88	❑ SEP/91	❑ WIN/96	❑ AUG/99	
❑ MAY/88	❑ OCT/91	❑ JAN/97	❑ SEP/99	
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ALPHABET RATINGS

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS

(Ratings as of December 2001)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: John Ruiz (USA)
1. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
2. Evander Holyfield (USA)
3. Vitaly Klitschko (UKR)
4. Mike Tyson (USA)
5. Fres Oquendo (PR)
6. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)
7. Oliver McCall (USA)
8. Jameel McCline (USA)
9. Larry Donald (USA)
10. Hasim Rahman (USA)
11. Chris Byrd (USA)
12. Vaughn Bean (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: Virgil Hill (USA)
1. Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
2. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
3. James Toney (USA)
4. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
5. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
6. O'Neil Bell (USA)
7. Ezra Sellers (USA)
8. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
9. Luis Pineda (PAN)
10. Jorge Castro (ARG)
11. Dale Brown (CAN)
12. Louis Azille (DR)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Super Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
Champ: Bruno Girard (FRA)
1. Lou Del Valle (USA)
2. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
3. Reggie Johnson (USA)
4. Clinton Woods (GB)
5. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
6. David Telesco (USA)
7. Antonio Tarver (USA)
8. Mads Larsen (DEN)
9. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
10. Robert Koon (USA)
11. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
12. Montell Griffin (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Byron Mitchell (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)
3. Thomas Tate (USA)
4. David Starie (GB)
5. Dana Rosenblatt (USA)
6. Julio Cesar Green (DR)
7. Manuel Siaca (PR)
8. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
9. Antwun Echols (USA)
10. Omar Sheika (USA)
11. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
12. Rudy Markussen (DEN)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Super Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Felix Trinidad (PR)
2. Howard Eastman (GB)
3. Keith Holmes (USA)
4. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
5. Darren Obah (AUSTRL)
6. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
7. Ryan Rhodes (GB)
8. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
9. Sam Hill (USA)
10. David Reid (USA)
11. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
12. Erland Betare (FRA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Fernando Vargas (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
5. Jose Flores (MEX)
6. Frank Olsen (DEN)
7. J.C. Candelo (COL)
8. Ike Quartey (GHA)
9. Kevin Kelly (USA)
10. Travis Simms (USA)
11. Michael Rask (DEN)
12. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Andrew Lewis (GUY)
1. Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GERE)
4. Chantel Stanciel (USA)
5. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
6. James Page (USA)
7. Jose Rivera (USA)
8. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
9. Hiroyuki Maeda (JAP)
10. Danny Perez (USA)
11. Arturo Gatti (USA)
12. Frederic Klose (FRA)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS

Super Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Hector Camacho Jr (PR)
2. Randall Bailey (USA)
3. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
4. Khalid Rahilou (FRA)
5. Demetrio Ceballos (PAN)
6. Ricky Hatton (GB)
7. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
8. Terronn Millett (USA)
9. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
10. Antonio Diaz (USA)
11. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
12. Ben Tackie (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Raul Balbi (ARG)
1. Vacant
2. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
3. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
4. Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)
5. Miguel Callist (PAN)
6. Sandro Casamonica (ITA)
7. Angel Manfredy (USA)
8. Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)
9. Alex Trujillo (PR)
10. Juan Lazcano (USA)
11. Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)
12. Rick Yoshimura (JAP)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Joel Casamayor (CUB)
1. Lakva Sim (MON)
2. Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
3. Lamont Pearson (USA)
4. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
5. Jongkwon Baek (KOR)
6. Michael Gomez (GB)
7. Kinji Amano (JAP)
8. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
9. Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)
10. Carlos Hernandez (SAL)
11. Silvano Usini (ITA)
12. Roberto Garcia (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Daniel Seda (PR)
3. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Victor Polo (COL)
6. Philip Ndou (SA)
7. Lewis Woods (US)
8. Johnny Tapia (USA)
9. Istvan Kovacs (HUN)
10. Injin Chi (KOR)
11. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
12. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Yober Ortega (VEN)
1. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
2. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
3. Walter Estrada (COL)
4. Israel Vasquez (MEX)
5. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
6. Osamu Sato (JAP)
7. Johnny Armour (GB)
8. Michael Brodie (GB)
9. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Oscar Larios (MEX)
12. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Eidy Moya (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Leo Gamez (VEN)
3. Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
4. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
5. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
6. Diego Morales (MEX)
7. Spend Abazi (DEN)
8. Adan Vargas (MEX)
9. Mark Johnson (USA)
10. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
11. Genaro Garcia (USA)
12. Noriaki Naka (JAP)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Celes Kobayashi (JAP)
1. Alexander Munoz (VEN)
2. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
3. Mbwana Matumla (TNZ)
4. Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
5. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
6. Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)
7. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
8. Jesus Rojas (VEN)
9. Katsushigo Kawashima (JAP)
10. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
11. Luis Bolanos (COL)
12. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)

FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
2. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
3. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
4. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
5. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
6. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
7. Damaen Kelly (GB)
8. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
9. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
10. Jose Carita Lopez (PR)
11. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
12. Martin Castillo (MEX)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
2. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
3. Yura Dima (MON)
4. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
5. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
6. Deeden Kengkarun (THAI)
7. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
8. Masibulele Makepula (SA)
9. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
10. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
11. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
12. Tatsuo Kayashida (JAP)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS

Champ: Vacant
1. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
2. Keitarò Hoshino (JAP)
3. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
4. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
5. Jose Garcia (COL)
6. Kim Ki Hwan (KOR)
7. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
8. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
9. Daniel Reyes (COL)
10. Khulile Makeba (SA)
11. Alex Sanchez (PR)
12. Jairo Arango (PAN)

WBC RATINGS

(Ratings as of December 2001)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Mike Tyson (USA)
2. Vitaly Klitschko (UKR)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. Fres Oquendo (USA)
5. Oliver McCall (USA)
6. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
7. Chris Byrd (USA)
8. Vaughn Bean (USA)
9. Larry Donald (USA)
10. Michael Moorer (USA)
11. Clifford Etienne (USA)
12. Jameel McCline (USA)
13. Lance Whitaker (USA)
14. David Tua (NZ)
15. Danny Williams (GB)
16. Ray Mercer (USA)
17. Monte Barrett (USA)
18. Brian Nielsen (DEN)
19. Henry Akinwande (GB)
20. Francois Botha (SA)
21. Lamon Brewster (USA)
22. Obed Sullivan (USA)
23. Faruq Saleem (USA)
24. Luan Krasniqi (GER)
25. Shannon Briggs (USA)
26. Timo Hoffman (GER)
27. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)
28. George Kandelaki (GEO)
29. Joe Mesi (USA)
30. Peter Okhello (UGA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)
1. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
5. Carlos Cruzat (CHI)
6. Louis Azille (DR)
7. Dale Brown (CAN)
8. Sebastiaan Rothmann (SA)
9. Bruce Scott (GB)
10. Arthur Williams (USA)
11. Turan Bagci (TUR)
12. Ramon Garbey (USA)
13. Ezra Sellars (USA)
14. Carl Thompson (GB)
15. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
16. Rudiger May (GER)
17. Jason Robinson (USA)
18. Jean-Marc Mormeck (FRA)
19. Adolpho Washington (USA)
20. Alain Simon (FRA)
21. Roman Kovalchuk (UKR)
22. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
23. Mohamed Ben Guesmia (ALG)
24. Robert Norton (GB)
25. William Guthrie (USA)
26. Frederic Serrat (FRA)
27. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
28. Hector Avila (ARG)
29. Sione Asipeli (TON)
30. Michael Rodgers (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Clinton Woods (GB)
2. Reggie Johnson (USA)
3. Yawe Davis (ITA)
4. Antonio Tarver (USA)
5. Mads Larsen (DEN)
6. Eric Harding (USA)
7. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
8. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
9. Michael Nunn (USA)
10. Bruno Girard (FRA)
11. Lou Del Valle (USA)
12. Montell Griffin (USA)
13. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
14. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
15. Derrick Harmon (USA)
16. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
17. Robert Koon (USA)
18. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
19. Jabrial Jabrialov (RUS)
20. Lincoln Carter (USA)
21. Chris Johnson (CAN)
22. Silvio Branco (ITA)
23. Sergio Baez (ARG)
24. Mario Tonus (ITA)
25. Juan Nelongo (SPA)
26. Stipe Drews (CRO)
27. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
28. Arturo Rivera (MEX)
29. George Jones (USA)
30. Sean Fitzgerald (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Eric Lucas (CAN)
1. Markus Beyer (GER)
2. David Starie (GB)
3. Thomas Tate (USA)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Glenn Catley (GB)
6. Dingaan Thobela (SA)
7. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
8. Antwun Echols (USA)
9. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
10. Omar Sheika (USA)
11. Jurgen Brahmer (GER)
12. Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)
13. Henry Porras (CR)
14. Charles Brewer (USA)
15. Ramon Britez (ARG)
16. David Reid (USA)
17. Mehdi Sanoune (FRA)
18. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
19. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
20. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
21. Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)
22. Omar Gonzalez (ARG)
23. Vinny Pazienza (USA)
24. Dan Batchelder (USA)
25. Robin Reid (GB)
26. Mario Veit (GER)
27. James Lubwana (UGA)
28. Sidney Msutu (SA)
29. Kippy Warren (USA)
30. Jeff Lacy (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Erland Betare (FRA)
2. Felix Trinidad (PR)
3. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
4. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
5. Keith Holmes (USA)
6. Carl Daniels (USA)
7. Naotaka Hozumi (JAP)
8. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
9. Aaron Davis (USA)
10. Raymond Joval (HOL)
11. Travis Simms (USA)
12. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
13. Kevin Palmer (USA)
14. Robert Allen (USA)
15. Evans Ashira (KEN)
16. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
17. Aaron Mitchell (USA)
18. Raul Marquez (USA)
19. Dwain Williams (USA)
20. Jose Clavero (ARG)
21. Marlon Hayes (USA)
22. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
23. Lansana Djallo (BEL)
24. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
25. Ryan Rhodes (GB)
26. Lawrence Chapman (USA)
27. Andres Galfi (HUN)
28. Stephan Trabant (GER)
29. Satoki Suzuki (JAP)
30. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
1. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
2. Francisco Castillejo (SPA)
3. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
4. J.C. Candelo (COL)
5. Bronco McKart (USA)
6. Yory Boy Campas (MEX)
7. Kirino Garcia (MEX)
8. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
9. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
10. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
11. Alex Bunema (USA)
12. Richard Williams (GB)
13. Paolo Pizzamiglio (ITA)
14. Steve Roberts (GB)
15. Kassim Ouma (USA)
16. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
17. Frank Olsen (DEN)
18. Alfred Ankamah (GHA)
19. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
20. Michael Rask (DEN)
21. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
22. Wayne Alexander (GB)
23. Adrian Stone (GB)
24. Jason Papillion (USA)
25. Elvis Guerrero (PAN)
26. Wilfredo Rivera (PR)
27. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
28. Anthony Farnell (GB)
29. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
30. Francisco Mora (ARG)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Shane Mosley (USA)
1. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
2. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
5. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
6. Danny Perez (USA)
7. Alessandro Duran (ITA)
8. Julian Holland (AUSTRL)
9. Cory Spinks (USA)
10. Maxim Nesterenko (RUS)
11. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
12. Reb Santillan (PHIL)
13. Alexander Vetoux (UKR)
14. Michel Trabant (GER)
15. Michele Orlando (ITA)
16. Antonio Diaz (MEX)
17. Hassan Al (DEN)
18. Chantel Stanciel (USA)
19. Oba Carr (USA)
20. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
21. Frederic Klose (FRA)
22. Rafael Pineda (COL)
23. Golden Johnson (USA)
24. Jose Rivera (USA)
25. Neil Sinclair (GB)
26. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
27. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
28. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
29. Peter Malinga (SA)
30. Hiroyuki Maeda (JAP)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Hector Camacho Jr (PR)
3. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
4. Eamonn Magee (GB)
5. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
6. Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA)
7. Ben Tackie (GHA)
8. Terronn Millett (USA)
9. James Leija (USA)
10. Wilfredo Vilches (ARG)
11. Ray Oliveira (USA)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
13. Ricky Hatton (GB)
14. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
15. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
16. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
17. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
18. Vivian Harris (USA)
19. Junior Witter (GB)
20. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
21. Ricky Quiles (USA)
22. Khalid Rahilou (FRA)
23. Teddy Reid (JAM)

24. Giuseppe Lauri (ITA)
24. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
25. Pablo Sarmiento (ARG)
26. Juan Mosquera (PAN)
27. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
28. Vince Phillips (USA)
29. Micky Ward (USA)
30. Michael Stewart (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Steve Johnston (USA)
3. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
4. Alex Trujillo (PR)
5. Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)
6. Julio Diaz (USA)
7. Lovemore Ndou (SA)
8. Carlos Gerena (PR)
9. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
10. Colin Dunne (GB)
11. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
12. Diego Gimenez (ARG)
13. Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)
14. Sandro Casamonica (ITA)
15. Michael Clark (USA)
16. Bobby Vanzie (GB)
17. Dennis Holbaek (DEN)
18. Leonard Dorin (CAN)
19. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
20. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
21. Aldo Rios (ARG)
22. Jongkwon Baek (KOR)
23. James Armah (GHA)
24. Moises Pedroza (COL)
25. Julian Wheeler (USA)
26. Efren Hinojosa (MEX)
27. Luis Lizarraga (MEX)
28. Omar Bernal (MEX)
29. Leavander Johnson (USA)
30. Sayan Sanchat (RUS)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
2. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Tiger Ari (PHIL)
5. Randy Suico (PHIL)
6. Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)
7. Lakva Sim (MON)
8. Philip Ndou (SA)
9. Affif Djelti (FRA)
10. Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)
11. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
12. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
13. Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)
14. Michael Gomez (GB)
15. Lamont Pearson (USA)
16. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
17. Mzonke Fana (SA)
18. Silvio Usini (ITA)
19. Claudio Martinet (ARG)
20. Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
21. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
22. Javier Alvarez (ARG)
23. Daniel Attah (NIG)
24. Alex Arthur (GB)
25. Hogu Min (KOR)
26. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
27. David Santos (USA)
28. Kinji Amano (JAP)
29. Koji Arisawa (JAP)
30. Zahir Raheem (US)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
3. Michael Brodie (GB)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
6. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
7. Scott Harrison (GB)
8. Anthony Tshehla (SA)
9. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
10. Guty Espadas (MEX)
11. Luis Fuentes (MEX)
12. Istvan Kovacs (HUN)
13. Junior Jones (USA)
14. Panther Yanagida (JAP)
15. Augie Sanchez (USA)
16. William Abelyan (USA)
17. Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)
18. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
19. Frankie Toledo (USA)
20. Daniel Seda (PR)
21. Orlando Soto (PAN)
22. Pastor Maurin (ARG)
23. Francisco Dianzo (MEX)
24. Samuel Duran (PHIL)
25. Toshikage Kimura (JAP)
26. Roger Medal (NIC)
27. John Michael Johnson (USA)
28. Joan Guzman (DR)
29. Mkuseli Kondile (SA)
30. Cyril Thomas (FRA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Willie Jorrin (USA)
1. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
2. Oscar Larios (MEX)
3. Osamu Sato (JAP)
4. Johnny Tapia (USA)
5. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
6. Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)
7. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
8. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
9. Marcos Licona (USA)
10. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
11. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
12. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
13. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
14. Fabian Oliva (ARG)
15. Yoshihisa Tomimoto (JAP)
16. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
17. Vincenzo Gigliotti (ITA)
18. Yongjin Cho (KOR)
19. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
20. Wethya Singwangcha (THAI)
21. Angel Chacon (PR)
22. Hector Julia Avila (DR)
23. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
24. Jaekwang Chung (KOR)
25. Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)
26. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
27. Tetsutora Senrima (JAP)
28. Jorge Solis (MEX)
29. Vladislav Antonov (RUS)
30. Brian Carr (GB)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Genaro Garcia (USA)
3. Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
4. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
5. Diego Morales (MEX)
6. Jess Maca (PHIL)
7. Noel Wilders (GB)
8. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
9. Mark Johnson (USA)
10. Cruz Carbajal (MEX)
11. Julio Zarate (MEX)
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19. Ricardo Barajas (MEX)
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21. Alexandre Yagupov (FRA)
22. Nicky Booth (GB)
23. Pete Frissina (USA)
24. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
25. Debind Thapa (NEP)
26. Fasan 3K-Battery (THAI)
27. Julio Cesar Medina (ARG)
28. Jimrex Haka (PHIL)
29. Frankie DeMilo (SWE)
30. Hyok Jun Kim (KOR)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masanori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
2. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
5. Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)
6. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
7. Luis Bolanos (COL)
8. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
9. Shingo Sasaki (JAP)
10. Erick Lopez (MEX)
11. Jose Angel Becerra (MEX)
12. Katsushigo Kawashima (JAP)
13. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
14. Vernie Torres (USA)
15. Eiji Kojima (JAP)
15. Takuya Kiya (JAP)
16. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
17. Takuya Kiya (JAP)
18. Trinidad Mendoza (MEX)
19. Luis Perez (NIC)
20. Alexander Knight (RUS)
21. Sot Sot Veeraphol (THAI)
22. Eric Barcelona (PHIL)
23. Julio Coronel (COL)
24. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
25. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
26. Mbwana Matumla (TAN)
27. Hiroaki Murakoshi (JAP)
28. Gonseng Duksoo (KOR)
29. Joel Avila (PHIL)
30. Jhunver Halog (PHIL)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
2. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
3. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
4. Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)
5. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
6. Alex Ali Baba (GHA)
7. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
8. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
9. Hawk Makepula (SA)
10. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
11. Everardo Morales (MEX)
12. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
13. Hayato Asai (JAP)
14. David Guerault (FRA)
15. Peter Culshaw (GB)
16. Damaen Kelly (GB)
17. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
18. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
19. Omar Narvaez (ARG)
20. Panieng Sasiprabha (THAI)
21. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
22. Jair Jimenez (COL)
23. Gilberto Keb-Baas (MEX)
24. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
25. Angel Priolo (COL)
26. Koji Koyama (JAP)
24. Dongkil Shin (KOR)
27. Melvin Magramo (PHIL)
28. Jason Booth (GB)
29. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
30. Phyong Choe Guk (KOR)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Yosam Choi (KOR)
1. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
2. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
4. Agustin Luna (MEX)
5. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
6. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
7. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
8. Pilkoo Kang (KOR)
9. Vuyisile Bebe (SA)
10. Surachai Saengmorokot (THAI)
11. Keisuke Yokoyama (JAP)
12. Jake Matlala (SA)
13. John Molina (COL)
14. Takayuki Korogi (JAP)
15. Luis Lazarte (ARG)
16. Chart Kiatpetch (THAI)
17. Victor Burgos (MEX)
18. Noboyuki Enomoto (JAP)
19. Celso Danggud (PHIL)
20. Rolly Lunas (PHIL)
21. Rodrigo Garcia (MEX)
22. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
23. Antonio Torres (MEX)
24. Jovan Presbitero (PHIL)
25. Minsoo Jang (KOR)
26. Jinho Kim (KOR)
27. Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)
28. Flash Villacura (PHIL)
29. Liborio Romero (MEX)
30. Oscar Murillo (NIC)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Khulile Makeba (SA)
2. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
4. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)
7. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
8. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
9. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
10. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
11. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
12. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
13. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
14. Manny Melchor (PHIL)
15. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
16. Juan Palacios (NIC)
17. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
18. Jairo Arango (PAN)
19. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
20. Fernando Luna (MEX)
21. Valentin Leon (MEX)
22. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
23. Wele Maqolo (SA)
24. Daisuke Iida (JAP)
25. Juan Centeno (NIC)
26. Omar Soto (MEX)
27. Mlungiselei Xokoloshe (SA)
28. Miguel Barrera (MEX)
29. Lorenzo Trejo (MEX)
30. Nico Thomas (INDO)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of January 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Chris Byrd (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Fres Oquendo (USA)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
6. Jameel McCline (USA)
7. Monte Barrett (USA)
8. Ray Mercer (USA)
9. David Tua (NZ)
10. Oliver McCall (USA)
11. Mike Tyson (USA)
12. Clifford Etienne (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
1. Jorge Castro (ARG)
2. Vacant
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
5. James Toney (USA)
6. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
7. Arthur Williams (USA)
8. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
9. Ezra Sellers (USA)
10. Imamu Mayfield (USA)
11. Louis Azille (DR)
12. Ramon Garbey (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
2. Reggie Johnson (USA)
3. Eric Harding (USA)
4. Antonio Tarver (USA)
5. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
6. Clinton Woods (GB)
7. David Telesco (USA)
8. Will Taylor (USA)
9. Bruno Girard (FRA)
10. Lou Del Valle (USA)
11. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
12. Thomas Ulrich (GER)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Thomas Tate (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Omar Sheika (USA)
4. Antwun Echols (USA)
5. David Starie (GB)
6. Charles Brewer (USA)
7. Markus Beyer (GER)
8. Mads Larsen (DEN)
9. Danilo Haussler (GER)
10. Sam Hill (USA)
11. Richard Grant (USA)
12. Fernando Zuniga (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Carl Daniels (USA)
2. Felix Trinidad (PR)
3. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
4. Erland Betare (FRA)
5. Keith Holmes (USA)
6. Raymond Joval (HOL)
7. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
8. Harry Simon (NAM)
9. Howard Eastman (GB)
10. Ali Ennebati (FRA)
11. Robert Allen (USA)
12. Bea Diallo (LIB)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. Bronco McKart (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
4. J.C. Candelo (COL)
5. Jason Papillion (USA)
6. Kirino Garcia (MEX)
7. Francisco Castillejo (SPA)
8. Alex Bunema (USA)
9. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
10. Robert Frazier (USA)
11. Travis Simms (USA)
12. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
2. Cory Spinks (USA)
3. Antonio Diaz (MEX)
4. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
5. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
6. Rafael Pineda (COL)
7. Jose Rivera (USA)
8. Danny Perez (USA)
9. Oba Carr (USA)
10. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
11. Julian Holland (AUSTRL)
12. Antonio Margarito (USA)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Ben Tackie (GHA)
4. Teddy Reid (JAM)
5. Terronn Millett (USA)
6. Carlos Vilches (ARG)
7. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
8. James Leija (USA)
9. Micky Ward (USA)
10. Ray Oliveira (USA)
11. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
12. Hector Camacho Jr. (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Paul Spadafora (USA)
1. Angel Manfredy (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
5. Julio Diaz (USA)
6. Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)
7. Steve Johnston (USA)
8. Dennis Holbaek (DEN)
9. Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)
10. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
11. Julian Wheeler (USA)
12. Michael Clark (USA)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Steve Forbes (USA)
1. Lamont Pearson (USA)
2. Vacant
3. David Santos (USA)
4. Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)
5. Luis Lizarraga (USA)
6. Philip Ndou (SA)
7. Carlos Hernandez (USA)
8. Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)
9. Jesus Chavez (USA)
10. Juan Arias (USA)
11. Daniel Attah (NIG)
12. John Brown (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manuel Medina (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Victor Polo (COL)
3. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
4. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
5. Frankie Toledo (USA)
6. Oscar Larios (MEX)
7. John Michael Johnson (USA)
8. David Toledo (USA)
9. Istvan Kovacs (HUN)
10. Michael Brodie (GB)
11. Augie Sanchez (USA)
12. Mbulelo Botile (SA)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. F. Rakkiatgym (INDO)
4. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
5. Fahsung 3K-Battery (THAI)
6. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
7. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
8. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
9. Fernando Velardez (USA)
10. Bones Adams (USA)
11. Johnny Tapia (USA)
12. Ernesto Grey (COL)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Tim Austin (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
4. Mark Johnson (USA)
5. Pete Frissina (USA)
6. Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
7. Diego Morales (MEX)
8. Adan Vargas (MEX)
9. Juan Cordoba (ARG)
10. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
11. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
12. Steve Dotse (GHA)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Felix Machado (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
5. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
6. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
7. Luis Bolano (COL)
8. Samson 3K-Battery (THAI)
9. Julio Coronel (COL)
10. Yani Malhendo (JAP)
11. Jesus Rojas (VEN)
12. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Hawk Makepula (SA)
4. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
5. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
6. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
7. David Guerault (FRA)
8. Mike Trejo (USA)
9. Damaen Kelly (GB)
10. Angel Priolo (COL)
11. Alex Ali Baba (GHA)
12. Jason Booth (GB)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Lopez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
4. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Zolani Petelo (SA)
7. Jose Burgos (MEX)
8. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
9. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
10. Jorge Arce (MEX)
11. Juan Keb Baas (MEX)
12. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roberto Leyva (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Miguel Barrera (MEX)
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
5. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
6. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
7. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
8. Mohamed Rachman (INDO)
9. Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)
10. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
11. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)
12. Jaewon Kim (KOR)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, February 1986

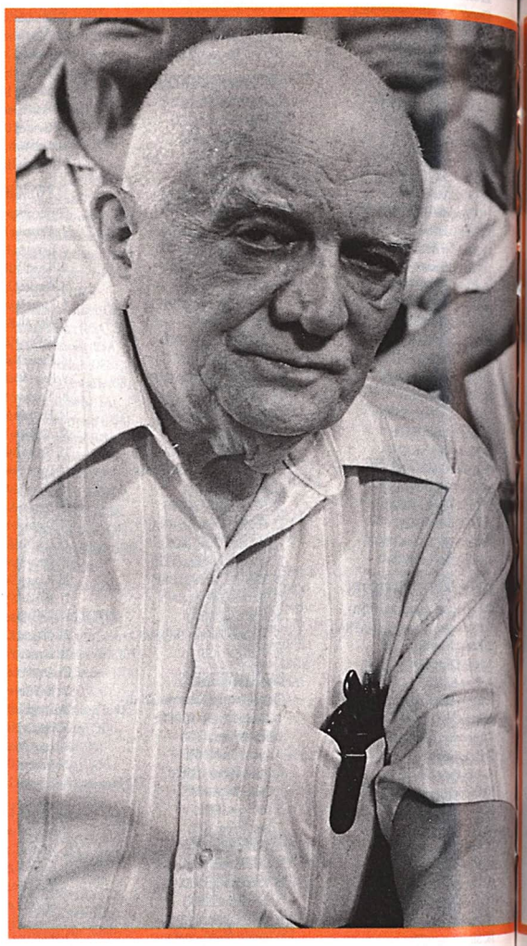
MIKE TYSON: THE LEGACY OF CUS D'AMATO

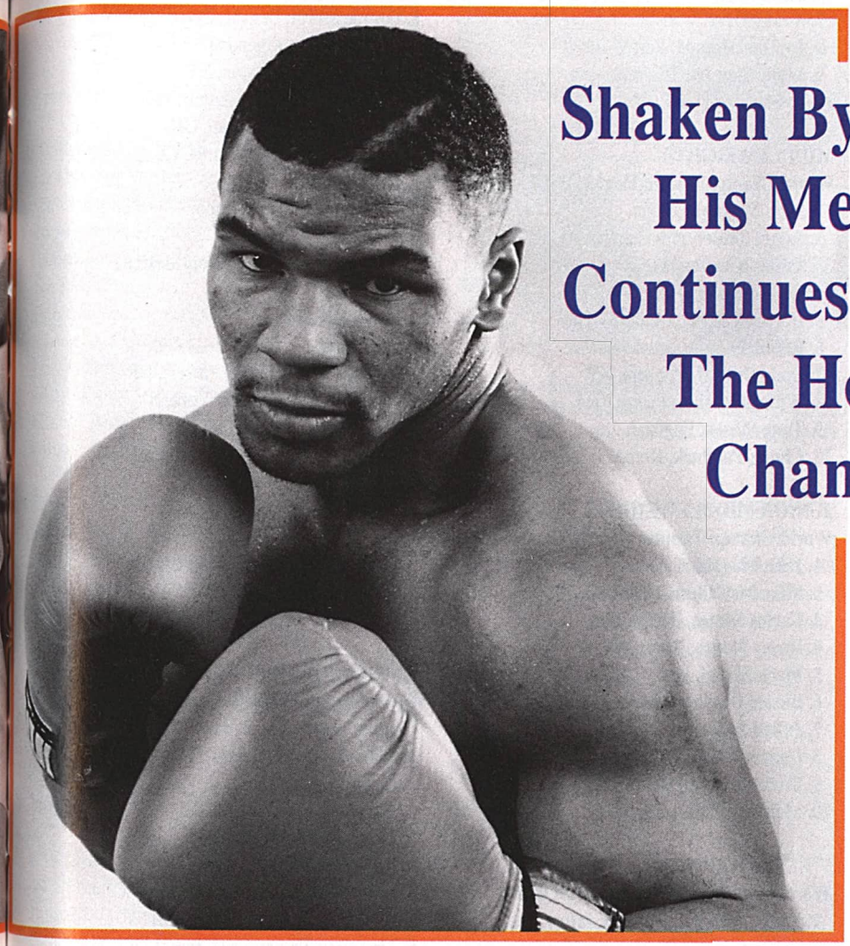
Shaken By The Death Of His Mentor, Tyson Continues His Quest For The Heavyweight Championship

By Nigel Collins

Mike Tyson was sitting in a dark room watching a videotape of Jack Johnson when a visitor arrived and suggested they watch the tape of Mike's 10-month career next. It didn't take long. Since his professional debut on March 6, 1985, Tyson has captured the imagination of the boxing world by streaking to 13 consecutive knockouts—and still counting. Nine of his victims fell in the opening round. And while the debate continues as to whether he is a legend in the making, or just another built-up palooka who'll fall apart the first time he faces a topnotch fighter, nobody is accusing Mike Tyson of being dull.

Tyson watched the tape impassively, and for the most part, refrained from comment. One victory (over Donnie Long) was judged particularly pleasing because "everybody said he would give me trouble," and another because "I heard he was a cop." But as most of the knockouts flickered by, Tyson was mute. In the time-honored tradition of strong, silent men from Samson to Sylvester Stallone, he let his fists do the talking.





When crusty old boxing guru D'Amato (left) took young street thug Tyson (right) into his home, it was the beginning of one of boxing's most riveting stories.

There is somewhat of a comic book quality about Tyson's fights. When he hits opponents, they just don't fall or slump to the mat. They fly across the ring, often bouncing off the floor or ropes before crashing to the canvas. It's a little like watching Popeye belt Brutus, or Batman plaster the Penguin. The violence is so exaggerated, it seems slightly surreal.

The spectacular manner in which Tyson disposes of his ring adversaries is not the only thing that makes him something out of the ordinary. Mike looks more like an NFL fullback than a fighter. He is 220 pounds of muscle crammed into a 5'11" frame. His 19½-inch neck is larger than any heavyweight champion's this side of Primo Carnera.

But numbers, whether they relate to knockouts or biceps, are not the stuff that legends are made of. No, what makes Tyson something special is his lasting relationship with the late Cus D'Amato. It is the story of how D'Amato took a troubled young man under his wing, delivered him from the mean streets of New York City's Brownsville section, and gave him an opportunity to fulfill his destiny. A destiny that D'Amato was positive would lead to the heavyweight championship of the world.

However, the road to sport's greatest prize in not paved by wise old men, anxious to pass on their knowledge. D'Amato could only show the protégé of his waning years the path to glory. Mike had to do the fighting. And fight he has, averaging a match every couple of weeks since his pro debut.

Tyson's whirlwind march through the John Does of the heavyweight division was hardly interrupted by the recent death of D'Amato. Although Mike was one of D'Amato's pallbearers, he was back in the ring a week after the funeral.

"I don't know who made up the saying, but 'the show must go on,'" said Mike softly. "That's what Cus believed."

Nevertheless, D'Amato's death was a staggering blow, one that still brings a quiver to Mike's voice when he speaks of his beloved mentor.

"Cus was more than a father to me. Anyone can be a father and it doesn't really mean anything. Cus was my backbone. I'm not over it [D'Amato's death] at all. The things we practiced [in the gym] for years and years … now I'm starting to do them and he's not around to see it.

"As a person, I'm just not happy. I'm not in a state where I hate the world and want to commit suicide. Far from it. It's just that although I'm somewhat successful, the people I enjoy the most, like Cus and my mother, aren't here. I know life goes on, but it's tough when you lose two important people."

The heavyweight dreadnought seemed paradoxically vulnerable in his grief, but Tyson didn't always have such faith in D'Amato. It took time. When the State of New York first released Mike into D'Amato's custody, he couldn't quite figure out where the old man was coming from.

"I didn't know what was going on. I didn't trust him," recalled Tyson when asked about his early days in D'Amato's Catskill mountain retreat. "The real objective for me was to get out of that place I was in [Tryon School in Johnstown, New York, a penal institution for incorrigible boys]. I wanted to get the hell out of there."

Tyson downplays his wild years on the streets, saying: "I wasn't really a bad kid. I used to rob and steal. Other people may consider that bad, but in my atmosphere and neighborhood, it wasn't s___. Other guys did worse things. They murdered people."

At first, D'Amato's home was just another prison to Tyson, but slowly the child of the ghetto was won over by Cus' kindness and understanding. According to Mike, it took the better part of two years, but eventually, he grew to trust and love the man who had, in a different era, taken both Floyd Patterson and Jose Torres to world championships.

"He did everything for my best interest," said Tyson. "It sounds funny, but when I was late for dinner, he'd always make sure nobody touched my food. And he wouldn't let anyone go in my room. We used to talk all the time. I was young, 14 or 15 years old. The things he was saying didn't always mean that much to me. Then an hour after we would finish talking, he would ask me, 'Mike, do you remember anything that I told you?' And I would say, 'Yeah, yeah,' and go outside. He told me so many things I would forget them. But then, I'd be walking down the street later and I would remember.

"Cus used to tell me mostly about how to be a successful person. I used to tell him how

THE RING RATINGS, February 1986

Barry McGuigan

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Michael Spinks, St. Louis, MO
1. **Pinklon Thomas,** Wyncote, PA
2. **Larry Holmes,** Easton, PA
3. **Tim Witherspoon,** Philadelphia, PA
4. **Tony Tubbs,** Cincinnati, OH
5. **Greg Page,** Louisville, KY
6. **Gerrie Coetzee,** South Africa
7. **Trevor Berbick,** Canada
8. **Carl Williams,** New York, NY
9. **Mike Weaver,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Michael Dokes,** Akron, OH

CRUISERWEIGHT
World Champ: Bernard Benton, Detroit, MI
1. **Dwight Muhammad Qawi,** Camden, NJ
2. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad,** Brooklyn, NY
3. **Alfonzo Ratliff, Chicago,** IL
4. **Carlos "Sugar" DeLeon,** Puerto Rico
5. **Piet Crous,** South Africa
6. **Osvaldo Ocasio,** Puerto Rico
7. **Lee Roy Murphy,** Chicago, IL
8. **Bashiru Ali,** Oakland, CA
9. **John Odhiambo,** Uganda
10. **Anthony Davis,** Las Vegas, NV

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Marvin Johnson,** Indianapolis, IN
2. **J.B. Williamson,** Inglewood, CA
3. **Willie Edwards,** Detroit, MI
4. **Eddie Davis,** Freeport, NY
5. **Prince Mama Mohammad,** Ghana
6. **Juan-Marie Emebe,** Cameroon
7. **Bobby Czyz,** Wanaque, NJ
8. **Jim MacDonald,** Fort Worth, TX
9. **Leslie Stewart,** Trinidad
10. **Dennis Andries,** England

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. **John Mugabi,** Uganda
2. **James Shuler,** Philadelphia, PA
3. **James Kinchen,** San Diego, CA
4. **Don Lee, Gary,** IN
5. **Herol Graham,** England
6. **Robbie Simms,** Brockton, MA
7. **Doug DeWitt,** Yonkers, NY
8. **Wilfred Benitez,** Puerto Rico
9. **Tony Sibson,** England
10. **Chong-Pal Park,** Korea

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Thomas Hearns, Detroit, MI
1. **John Mugabi,** Uganda
2. **Mike McCallum,** New York, NY
3. **Carlos Santos,** Puerto Rico
4. **Davey Moore,** Bronx, NY
5. **Mark Medal,** Jersey City, NJ
6. **Buster Drayton,** Philadelphia, PA
7. **Julian Jackson,** Virgin Islands
8. **Donald Curry,** Fort Worth, TX
9. **David Braxton,** Detroit, MI
10. **Matthew Hilton,** Canada

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Donald Curry, Fort Worth, TX
1. **Milton McCrory,** Detroit, MI
2. **Tommy Ayers,** Cincinnati, OH
3. **Maurice Blocker,** Washington, D.C.
4. **Marlon Starling,** Hartford, CT
5. **Simon Brown,** Washington, D.C.
6. **Lloyd Honeyghan,** England
7. **Colin Jones,** Wales
8. **Johnny Bumphus,** Clementon, NJ
9. **Horace Shufford,** Las Vegas, NV
10. **Sylvester Mittee,** England

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Lonnie Smith,** Denver, CO
2. **Ubaldi Sacco,** Argentina
3. **Bill Costello,** Kingston, NY
4. **Ronnie Shields,** Port Arthur, TX
5. **Aaron Pryor,** Cincinnati, OH
6. **Gene Hatcher,** Fort Worth, TX
7. **Patrizio Oliva,** Italy
8. **Rene Arredondo,** Mexico
9. **Terry Marsh,** England
10. **Rodolfo "Gato" Gonzalez,** Mexico

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Livingstone Bramble,** Passaic, NJ
2. **Hector Camacho,** New York, NY
3. **Jimmy Paul, Detroit,** MI
4. **Tyrone Crawley,** Philadelphia, PA
5. **Jose Luis Ramirez,** Mexico
6. **Edwin Rosario,** Puerto Rico
7. **Darryl Tyson,** Washington, D.C.
8. **Cornelius Boza-Edwards,** Uganda
9. **Terrence Alli,** New York, NY
10. **Sammy Fuentes,** Puerto Rico

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Wilfredo Gomez, Puerto Rico
1. **Julio Cesar Chavez,** Mexico
2. **Rocky Lockridge,** Maple Shade, NJ
3. **Roger Mayweather,** Las Vegas, NV
4. **Alfredo Layne,** Panama
5. **Mario Martinez,** Mexico
6. **Rafael Solis,** Puerto Rico
7. **Kenny Baysmore,** Washington, D.C.
8. **Johnny de la Rosa,** Detroit, MI
9. **Francisco Tomas Cruz,** Brazil
10. **Barry Michael,** Australia

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Barry McGuigan, Ireland
1. **Azumah Nelson,** Ghana
2. **Eusebio Pedroza,** Panama
3. **Juan LaPorte,** Puerto Rico
4. **Marcos Villasana,** Mexico

I would like to meet famous people like actors, and he would tell me to keep doing what I was doing and one day they'd be breaking their necks trying to meet me. And he was right."

One of the things D'Amato strongly believed was that boxing was a form of entertainment, and that in order to be successful, a professional fighter has to also be entertaining. About six months before his death, Cus told THE RING, "From the beginning, Mike has been taught to be exciting." In an effort to show exactly just how well Mike learned this particular lesson, we recently traveled to Albany, New York—the site of his 13th consecutive victory.

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It was a cold, rainy night, but almost 3,000 fans braved the elements, filling the Colonie Coliseum to capacity. Many among them proudly wore their Mike Tyson T-shirts. Basketball may have its "Dr. J" and baseball its "Dr. K," but a couple of kids had a handmade sign proclaiming Tyson "Dr. Knockout." The posters already billed him as the "Future Heavyweight Champion."

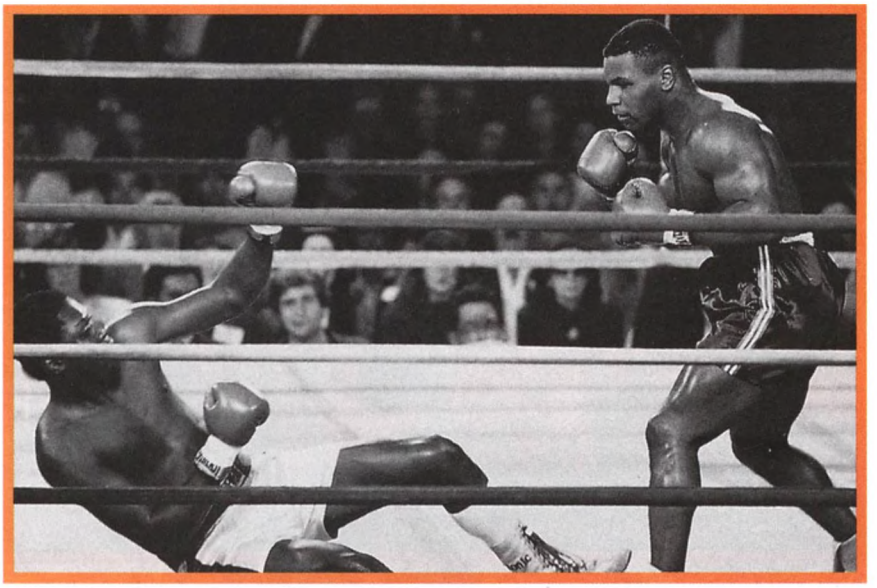
The customers tolerated two inept prelims and then it was time for Tyson to do his thing. Whenever possible, Mike's bouts start around 9 p.m., so that the tape of his latest

5. **Jackie Beard,** Detroit, MI
6. **Calvin Grove,** Pottstown, PA
7. **Ki-Yung Chung,** Korea
8. **Bernard Taylor,** Knoxville, TN
9. **Min-Keun Oh,** Korea
10. **Tyrone Jackson,** New York, NY

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Victor Callejas,** Puerto Rico
2. **Lupe Pintor,** Mexico
3. **Loris Stecca,** Los Angeles, CA
4. **Jaime Garza,** Italy
5. **Julian Solis,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Soon-Hyun Chung,** Puerto Rico
7. **Jorge Ramirez,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **James Pipps,** Vidor, TX
9. **Harold Petty,** Fort Worth, TX
10. **Oscar Muniz,** Los Angeles, CA

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Richard Sandoval, Los Angeles, CA
1. **Jiro Watanabe,** Japan
2. **Miguel Lora,** Colombia
3. **Khaosai Galaxy,** Thailand
4. **Greg Richardson,** Youngstown, OH
5. **Gaby Canizales,** Laredo, TX
6. **Daniel Zaragoza,** Mexico
7. **Freddie Jackson,** Houston
8. **Edgar Monserrat,** Panama
9. **Albert Davila,** Mexico
10. **Jeff Fenech,** Australia

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Sot Chitalada, Thailand
1. **Jung-Koo Chang,** Korea
2. **Gabriel Bernal,** Mexico
3. **Hilario Zapata,** Panama
4. **Myung-Woo Yuh,** Korea
5. **Joey Olivo,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Sugar Baby Rojas,** Miami, FL
7. **Dodie Penalosa,** Philippines
8. **Jose DeJesus,** Puerto Rico
9. **Alonzo Gonzalez,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Isidro Perez,** Mexico



There was an almost surreal quality to many of Tyson's early knockouts, as he hit his opponents so hard, they often bounced off the ropes or canvas before coming to rest. Robert Colay, pictured on his way to a first-round defeat, was one of those unlucky victims.

triumph is ready in time for the nightly newscasts across the nation.

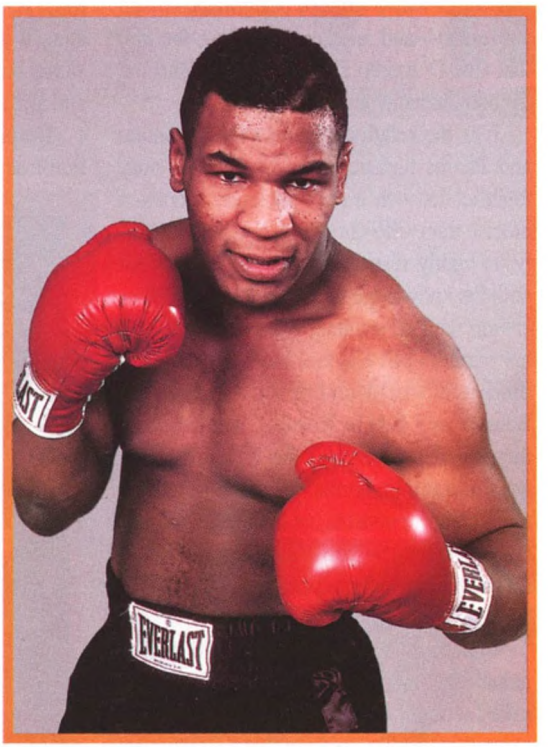
The designated victim was Canadian Conroy Nelson, a tall, lanky boxer, who entered the ring amidst a scattering of boos. When Mike came down the runway, the arena erupted into a wall of noise that seldom subsided until the hero was on his way to the shower.

It was a typical Tyson fight. Mike exploded from his corner and immediately took the fight to Nelson, who meekly covered up and retreated. Seeing that Nelson was protecting his head at all costs, Tyson wisely concentrated his attack to the body. As wicked hooks from both hands sunk into Nelson's sides, he grimaced and tried his best to survive.

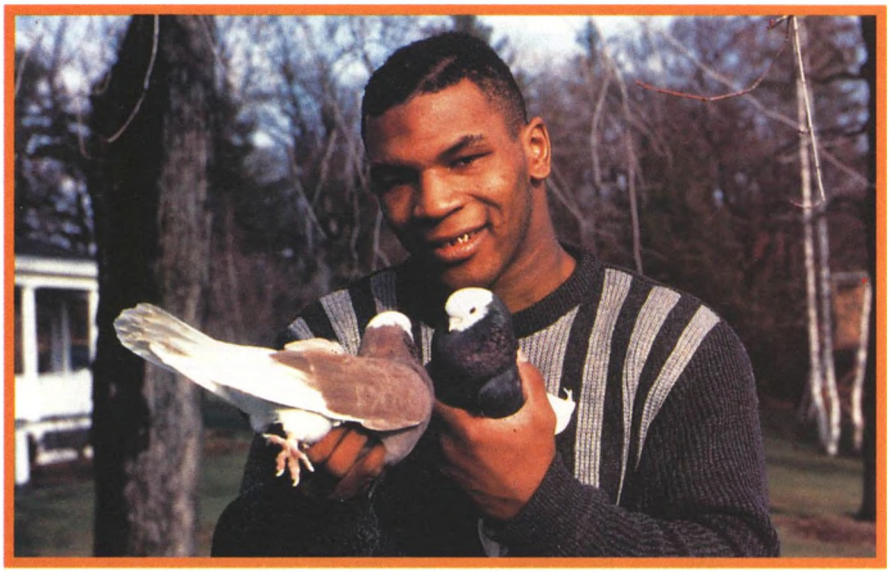
Midway into the round, Tyson paused momentarily, and Nelson landed his only decent punch of the evening—a sharp right uppercut to the chin. The punch brought no adverse effects and Tyson quickly resumed his assault. On two occasions, left hooks to Nelson's body almost ended the fight, but Conroy was still on his feet when the bell signaled the end of his three minutes in Tyson's meat grinder.

Thirty seconds into the second, it was all over. It took just one brutal left hook to the head to take the rest of the fight out of the shell-shocked Canadian. The punch caught Nelson on the side of his nose, sending him tumbling to the floor. He rolled toward the ropes where he lay, one foot and one arm draped over the bottom rope. When referee Sidney Rubenstein's count reached seven, Nelson made an attempt to struggle to his feet. He appeared to just beat the count, but Rubenstein counted him out anyway. There was no argument from any quarter.

Shortly after his easy win, Tyson was seated on a couch in the trailer that served as his dressing room, surrounded by the flower of the provincial press. He politely answered the same old questions he's already answered



Tyson was a hit with the fans from the start, and was billed as the "Future Heavyweight Champion" after a dozen pro bouts. Besides teaching him how to fight, D'Amato instilled in his young protégé the importance of being entertaining.



Tyson raised pigeons at D'Amato's home in Catskill, New York. It took a long time for the trainer to earn Tyson's trust, but by the time D'Amato died, he was the most important person in the boxer's life.

a hundred times before, but it was co-manager Jim Jacobs who really shined during the question-and-answer session. Jacobs parried probing questions into the quality of Mike's opponents with the skill of a career diplomat. When asked about Tyson's next scheduled opponent (the hapless Sammy Scaff), Jacobs made sure to emphasize his size (around 250 pounds), but astutely avoided mentioning just how many of those pounds were pure blubber. It was a virtuoso performance by all concerned—and another step along the trail that Cus D'Amato had so carefully laid out for both manager and fighter.

It is the relationship between D'Amato and Jacobs that ties the Mike Tyson story together in such a neat package. Jacobs, a precise man who chooses his words carefully, is highly respected in boxing circles for both his knowledge of the sport and his association with outstanding fighters. Jacobs and his partner, Bill Cayton, have already handled two world champions in Wilfred Benitez and Edwin Rosario. The fact that they are also partners in the fight film business is another bonus. When it comes to researching opponents, or marketing a fighter, they have few peers. But it was Jacobs' almost lifelong friendship with D'Amato that brought them together with Tyson.

"There is no one in the world whose judgment I trust more than Cus D'Amato's," said Jacobs. "If a thousand people, and I mean this literally, told me that a fighter was 'A,' and Cus told me he was 'B,' he was 'B.' And Cus D'Amato told me that in his opinion Mike Tyson was going to be the heavyweight champion of the world. That's all I had to hear."

What has ensued goes far beyond the normal fighter/manager relationship.

"There is an incredible difference between our relationship with Mike and other fighters we've managed," said Jacobs. "When Bill and I got involved with Wilfred Benitez and Edwin Rosario, it was exciting, but it was business. Our relationship with Mike is, first and foremost, a family relationship. It just so happens that he is a professional boxer. Cus adored Mike, and that love and affection is contagious."

Despite Tyson's remarkable transformation from street punk to a young man on the threshold of possible athletic greatness, he remains partially hidden behind a screen of suspicion.

"I don't trust anyone," claims Mike. "People want to do me favors. They want to take me out to dinner. But they didn't want to buy me dinner five years ago when I didn't have any food.

"Every day of my life I look in the mirror and I know I'm not Mr. Black America. I don't have the most charming personality in the world. But girls continue to call and want to go out with me. And eventually, they're gonna look for something in return."

This bitter residue from the past will probably benefit Tyson as he swims boxing's shark-infested waters. It certainly doesn't sound like any camp followers will be draining Tyson's coffers. And those gnawing memories of his deprived childhood just might provide the catalyst to make D'Amato's formula bear fruit.

As Tyson's knockouts continue to mount, so does the number of people who tend to agree with Jacobs' glowing assessment.

"Right now I think he's the best young heavyweight I've seen in years," said veteran matchmaker Teddy Brenner. "He's a great offensive fighter, highly competitive. He doesn't know about 'feeling out' an opponent in the first round. He goes for the kayo right away. He's a good puncher and a good finisher.

"I only have two questions that remain to be answered," continued Brenner. "One, how will he do when someone takes him five or

The brains behind the brawn: Bill Cayton (left) and Jim Jacobs did a masterful job of building Tyson into the most talked-about heavyweight since Muhammad Ali. Jacobs, a longtime friend of D'Amato, had complete faith in the trainer's opinions and methods.

six rounds? Is he muscle-bound? If you remember, George Foreman was great in the early rounds, but then he used to run out of gas. Two, how well can Tyson take a punch?"

Brenner also helped put into perspective the sometimes questionable quality of Mike's opponents.

"Some of the guys he's beaten have been bums, but guys like Donnie Long and Conroy Nelson usually give you rounds. Tyson took them out early. I have problems getting him opponents for Atlantic City, because guys know if they get knocked out, they'll get suspended and have to take a lot of expensive medical tests before they can fight in New Jersey again."

Others are not so charitable in their evaluation.

"In the way he's been handled, it's almost like he's a 'white hope' in a black man's skin," opined THE RING's own Jack Obermayer, who has had several opportunities to observe Tyson in action in Atlantic City. "Tyson has an honorable man behind him in Jim Jacobs, but I think everyone is making far too much of him, far too soon."

Jacobs would be the first to agree that it is premature to start talking about a title fight.

"Take a look at any fighter who comes to your mind, Joe Louis, Ray Robinson, anybody, and look at what they did in the first 10 months of their careers," challenged Jacobs. "They weren't even in the embryo stage of their careers. They weren't even getting started in the first 10 months. That's why Bill and I get hysterical when people ask us when Mike is fighting for the world title."

Jacobs also has an answer for those who criticize the caliber of opposition Tyson sees when he looks across the ring on fight night.

"I take that as a supreme compliment. The more we are criticized, the more I read in the papers that we are moving Mike too slowly, the more I'm pleased. I look on it as a badge of honor. The people who try to suggest the pace of a young, 19-year-old fighter with enormous talent should be moved at, are probably brilliant sportswriters, probably excellent television commentators, but whether or not they are qualified to be boxing managers is a different question."

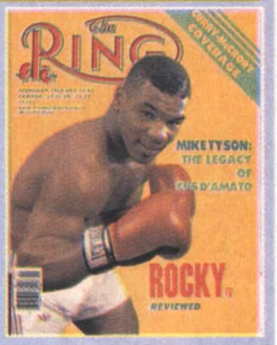
"I find it amusing," adds Cayton, whose production *The Legendary Champions* was nominated for an Academy Award.

Part of D'Amato's method of building a fighter is predicated on never, never allowing one of his fighters to face a man Cus wasn't absolutely sure he could beat. Needless to say, D'Amato was less than enthralled when Patterson finally decided to defend his title against Sonny Liston. And you had better believe that Jacobs and Cayton are following the D'Amato method with Tyson.

"I talked to Cus for thousands of hours about Mike," revealed Jacobs. "Cus would repeat himself. He would tell me, in great detail, over and over, every step to take with Mike. When I think about what I'm doing, I just press a button in my head and I can hear Cus talking to me. What I am doing is precisely and exactly what Cus told me to do."

But in the final analysis, it doesn't really matter what Jacobs does, or what anybody says or writes about Tyson. We have come full circle in our search for the answer to the riddle the untested Tyson presents—back to the fighter himself. Eventually, Tyson will step into the ring with someone capable of administering the final exam, and then, and only then, will we know whether Cus D'Amato was right. ■

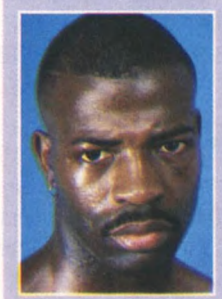
THE RING, February 1986



The Cover: Mike Tyson was a 19-year-old kid enthralled with boxing, chalking up knockout after knockout, while raising the curiosity of boxing fans across the country. But Tyson revealed an ominous side, too, in the first cover story THE RING did on the youngest fighter to ever win a portion of the heavyweight title.

Tearing Down Taboos: The old axiom that "women weaken legs," as well as other superstitious beliefs about boxers were addressed. Old trainers used to believe sex was supposed to drain a man's strength, and forced their fighters to abstain from sex prior to a fight. Muhammad Ali proved otherwise.

Rocky IV *Reviewed:* Sylvester Stallone's Philadelphia cinematic boxing hero went political in taking an out-of-town bout against indestructible Russian giant Ivan Drago, played by Dolph Lungren—not Wladimir Klitschko. The movie pandered to the Reagan-era jingoism and rated a pitiful one star out of four.



A Future Champ: In 1986, Vincent Pettway was a junior welterweight from Baltimore, Maryland, with a 15-0 record, appearing in the "New Faces" feature. Pettway would go on to become the IBF junior middleweight titlist in '94, with a fourth-round knockout of Gianfranco Rosi.

Fighter Of The Month: Donald Curry was expected to beat Milt McCrory and become the undisputed welterweight champ. What shocked experts was how quickly Curry dispatched the previously undefeated McCrory, who was stopped with 1:53 left in the second round.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

LENNOX LEWIS: ALL-TIME WHAT?

After Lennox Lewis' fourth-round destruction of Hasim Rahman, which was impressive, I'll admit, I can't believe the number of fans and boxing commentators who refer to Lewis as an all-time great now. I specifically remember Max Kellerman's comment about how we must now rethink Lewis' place in boxing history.

Did I miss something? Are we all forgetting Lewis hand-picked "The Rock" for a tuneup fight before he went on to bigger and better things, like Mike Tyson? If Lewis would have defeated The Rock in their first fight like he did in the rematch, I doubt all the boxing experts would be speaking of Lewis like he is the second coming.

The Rock is definitely good, but we would have just heard Lewis did what champions are supposed to do to fighters outside of their league. The rematch didn't make Lewis an all-time great, it just proved how much he flopped in the first fight!

As for Lewis as an all-time great, who would you put your money on if Lewis, who was shaken by Shannon Briggs, Hasim Rahman, and Oliver McCall, fought Joe Frazier, Muhammad Ali, George Foreman, Rocky Marciano, or Joe Louis?

WES GABEHART
Ashland, IL

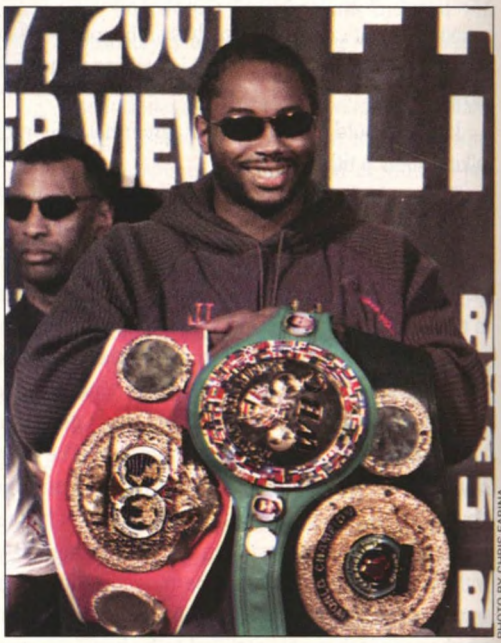


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

The Lennox Lewis victory over Hasim Rahman may have been impressive, but reader Wes Gabehart was taken aback when commentators and fans started referring to Lewis as an all-time great. All-time greats, notes Gabehart, are not shaken by Rahman, Oliver McCall, or Shannon Briggs.

ZAP ZAB

Controversial ending? Come on Zab Judah, you were asking "Which one of you guys hit me?" as you stumbled around after being nailed by Kostya Tszyu. The ref saved you from more brain damage. Will I watch you in the future? Yes, but only if it is not pay-per-view, and only to root for you to get knocked out again!

BARRY M. DALEY
Allen, TX

MORE MUNITIONS AT MUNDINE

In regard to Anthony Mundine's insane comments suggesting that America brought the atrocity of September 11 on itself, I have to think he plans on giving back that American money he makes, in the American boxing ring, on this American soil. Perhaps Mundine would prefer the comforts of Afghanistan or other countries that persecute you much worse than stripping you of your ranking for having an opinion. I'm sure he'll find plenty of opportunity for a life of liberty in those lands.

I pray that Mundine realizes that his comments have not made things any easier for his fellow Muslims and Middle Easterners here in America, some of whom are just as patriotic as any other Christian, Hindu, Jew, Buddhist, atheist, and those of all faiths, religions, and people who are

blessed to live under the sweet liberty that this great land called America provides. I conclude that Mundine is an idiot, a disgrace, and an obscure contender no one even heard of until you got, oh, some good old American press.

JOHN LEE
New York, NY

TIME FOR KLITSCHKO & JOHNSON

I'm a 23-year-old boxing fanatic, and I would really like to know when Kirk Johnson or Wladimir Klitschko are going to get the title shots that they deserve. I know that Mike Tyson has waited for a long time for his shot, but are we really ready for another of his freak shows? I believe that before the year 2002 is over, a showdown between Johnson and Klitschko should determine who gets the next pop at Lewis, because I truly believe that it would be a waste of time seeing either Johnson or Klitschko fight John Ruiz.

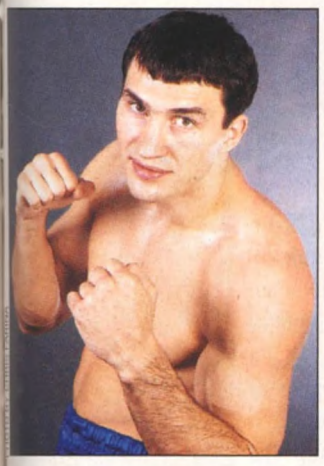
JORGE ROMERO
Philadelphia, PA

TYSON CAN'T SCARE LEWIS

When Mike Tyson and Lennox Lewis meet, it's going to be a bout between two fighters who are both now past their best. The winner will be the one who has declined less. Tyson will not intimidate Lewis. Lewis is a better boxer and puncher than both Razor Ruddock and Evander Holyfield, whom Tyson looked ordinary against. Lewis has too much for Tyson in every department. He possesses the best jab in the heavy division, the best movement of any heavy since Ali, and also has an array of combinations that lead to concussed opponents. There is no doubt that Lewis possesses more than enough power, style, and skill to not only win, but to win big.

Lewis will knock out Tyson between the fifth and ninth rounds after first taking him to school with his power jabs. He will stick and move, then unload his combinations from long range against a vastly smaller guy. Tyson will, of course, try to chuck his bombs, because that is his only chance of victory. There is just no way he can beat Lewis in a boxing contest over 12 rounds, now or in the 1980s.

C.A. BEALE
Wolverhampton, England



It's time Wladimir Klitschko (left) and Kirk Johnson (right) get title shots against Lennox Lewis, insists reader Jorge Romero. Do we really want to see Klitschko or Johnson face John Ruiz?

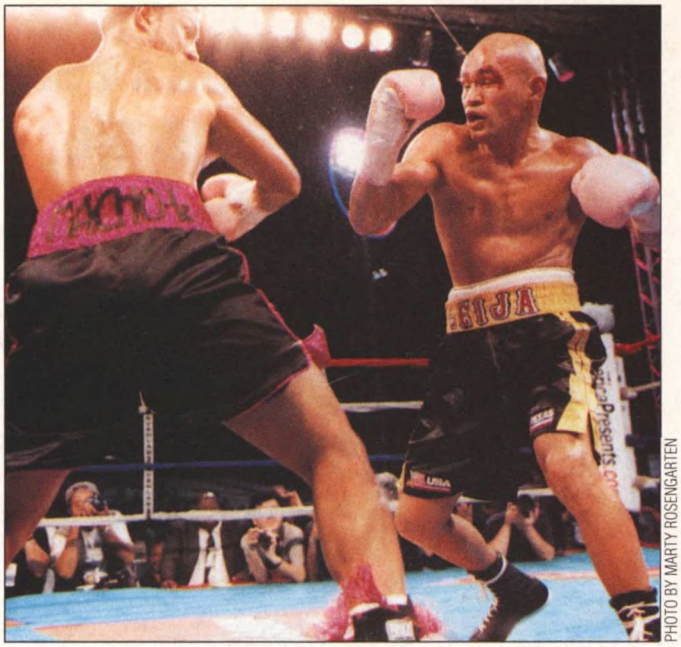


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Jesse James Leija's controversial no-contest against Hector Camacho Jr. (pictured) should not be compared to Leija's technical-decision victory over Micky Ward, says reader Derek Bonnett. Bonnett took exception to the view of the HBO broadcasters, who pointed out that Leija in some way quit after suffering a cut, as Camacho did.

LEAVE LEIJA ALONE

I do not understand how the HBO team can praise Jesse James Leija in one instance, then turn around and slap him in the face the next. Leija has been one of the game's most exciting performers inside of the ring. He is always in top condition and gives his best. After the fight, no matter what the outcome, he is always gracious and polite to interviewers and his opponents. For Larry Merchant and company to compare his win over Micky Ward to Hector Camacho Jr.'s quitting is ridiculous. First of all, Leija did not quit. In fact, he never once complained. The fight was stopped. His corner may have complained a bit too obviously, but Leija's voice was never heard. Secondly, Camacho Jr. was cut for all of thirty seconds before he gave up. Leija was cut about a minute into the fight and he still pressed the action against a naturally bigger fighter. More importantly, he got the better of Ward. It was Ward who was rocked repeatedly throughout the five rounds, not Leija.

DEREK BONNETT
Bristol, CT

FIGHT SOMEBODY, ROY!

This letter is difficult for me to write, because I've been a fan of Roy Jones ever since I first became interested in boxing. I still think that Jones is the best fighter in the world, but he's starting to alienate even his biggest supporters with his unwillingness to face any serious competition. Even though there aren't a lot of marquee names out there in his division, there are still some tough fighters such as Dariusz Michalczewski and Bernard Hopkins. Unfortunately, Roy is starting to give the impression that he's afraid of them. He needs to fight Michalczewski and Hopkins if he's to prove his dominance.

PETER deLANGE
Duncan, British Columbia ■

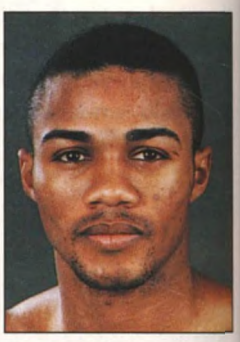
LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

TITO'S RETURN IS A TRINI-DUD

If there's anyone whose quality of opposition should never be criticized, it's **Felix Trinidad**. In the last three years alone, "Tito" has fought **Bernard Hopkins**, **William Joppy**, **Fernando Vargas**, **David Reid**, **Oscar De La Hoya**, and **Pernell Whitaker**. Some guys go through an entire career without fighting six guys that good and still make it to the Hall of Fame.

That being said, Trinidad's choice of opponent for his May 11 return to the ring is so far beyond competitive that it's worth criticizing. Trinidad will be taking on **Hassine Cherifi**, the tough but limited Frenchman who scored one noteworthy win in his entire career—an upset decision over **Keith Holmes** for the WBC middleweight belt four years ago—and has parlayed that into a run of well-paying gigs as a no-hope punching bag to the world's better 160-pounders. He lost the title back to Holmes via seventh-round TKO, got shut out over 12 rounds by Joppy, and got dominated over 12 rounds by **Harry Simon**.



Trinidad: Sure thing with Cherifi

Simon was initially being mentioned as the likely opponent for Trinidad on May 11, and obviously he would have been more acceptable to fight fans than the rapidly fading Cherifi. Joppy, as we all remember, was obliterated by Trinidad. That gives you a sense of how vast the chasm between Trinidad and Cherifi is. Trinidad definitely deserves an easy fight. But *this* easy? Even the guys **Roy Jones** fights aren't as badly outclassed as Cherifi is going to be.

Still, promoter **Don King** insists the French toast he's serving up to his Puerto Rican star is a suitable meal.

"We don't want Tito in too tough of a comeback fight, but we want a credible opponent, someone who was a former world champion," King said. "Tito doesn't deserve to be in there with a giant killer."

No, he doesn't, but nobody would have called Simon, or Holmes, or **Howard Eastman** a "giant killer." They would have simply been opponents without any realistic chance of beating Trinidad, but with the ability to make him work for a win.

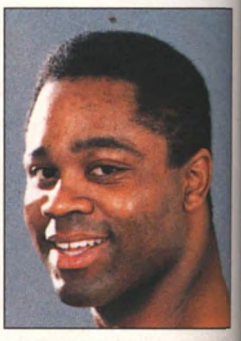
There is some good news, however, from Team Trinidad: Their long-range plan involves getting back to fighting the best after the Cherifi tuneup. A week before Trinidad-Cherifi, De La Hoya fights Vargas (check out next month's RING for an in-depth preview), and Trinidad wants the winner next. If successful there, Tito wants to follow up with a rematch against the man who beat him, Hopkins.

"Papa Trinidad likes to lay a plan down," said DKP matchmaker **Bobby Goodman**. "Of course, you have to continue to adjust and assess as you go from fight to fight. We'll see against Cherifi how easily Tito makes 160, then we'll determine if he can go down to 154 for De La Hoya or Vargas, and we'll take it from there."

HBO will carry the Trinidad-Cherifi fight, and though the network never makes advance announcements about their pay-per-view fight rebroadcasts, it's a safe bet that De La Hoya-Vargas will be shown as the co-feature.

LISTEN UP

Don King is trying to put together a heavyweight doubleheader featuring **John Ruiz** vs. **Kirk Johnson** and **Evander Holyfield** vs. **Hasim Rahman**. How quickly Ruiz completes his recovery from his last fight with Holyfield will determine when the card may come about ... Undisputed junior welterweight champion **Kostya Tszyu** is planning to make his first defense of the unified title on May 18 on Showtime. The challenger was still up in the air as of press time ... **Naseem Hamed's** new three-fight deal with HBO is expected to take the following course: a March 23 return in England vs. overmatched **Manuel Calvo**, a summer fight in the U.S. vs. either **Johnny Tapia** or **Manny Pacquiao**, and a fall pay-per-view fight vs. the **Marco Antonio Barrera-Erik Morales** winner. ■



Johnson: Gets the next shot at Ruiz

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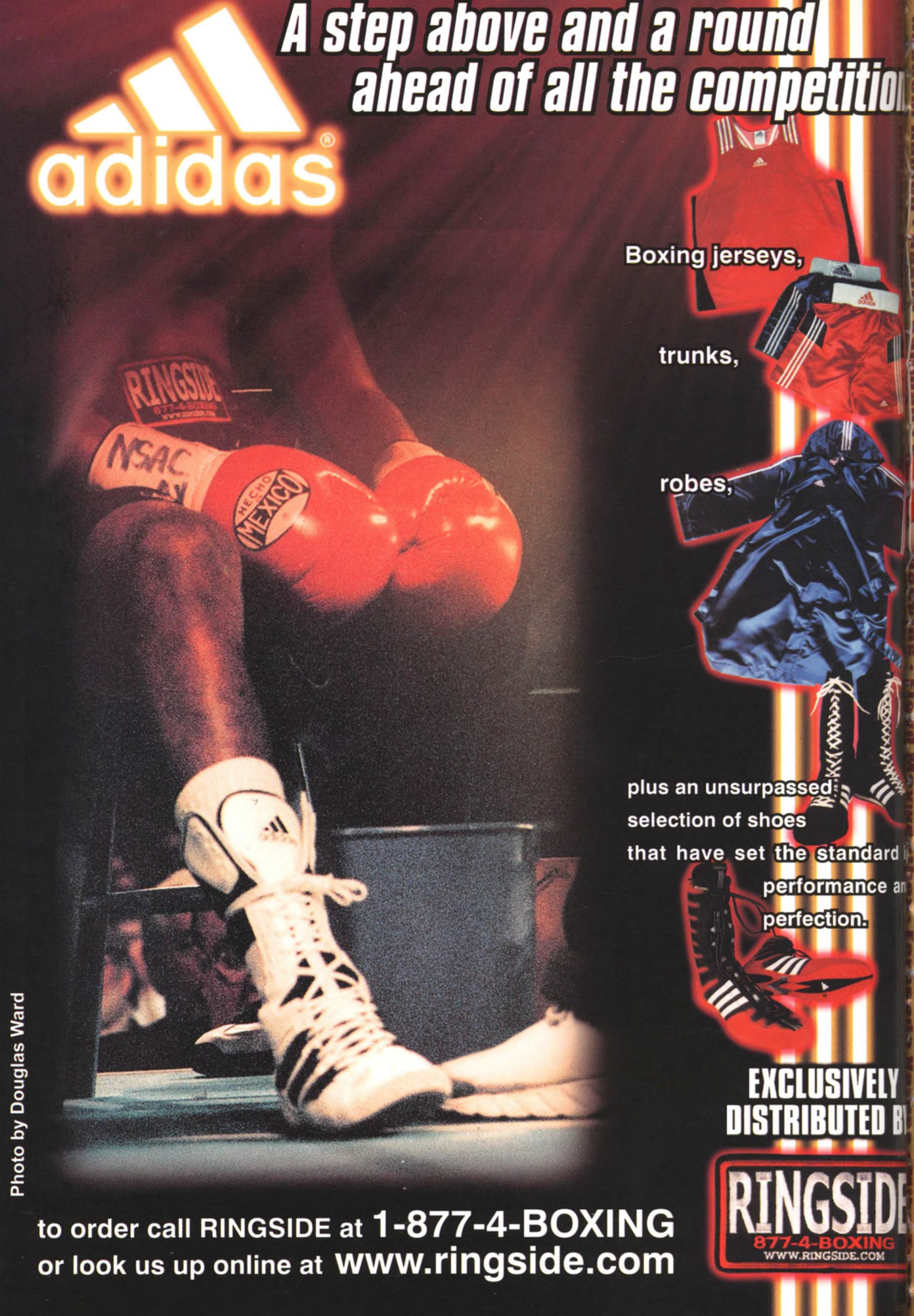

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